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A FOREWORD.

During the past few years there has been an increasing demand on the part of the reading public for the printed sermon. One of the largest publishing houses in this country printed last year a volume of sermons each month, and at the end of the series declared that the sales of these volumes were entirely satisfactory—reaching thirty thousand volumes.

Recognizing the existence of this demand, and to gratify it some of the leading secular papers of the world have made a sermon from some distinguished minister of the gospel a leading feature of their issues. The printed sermon was once popular—a bound volume of sermons having a place in every well selected library of the people. The cultured found in them a peculiar feature of the literature of the time, while the religious from the often read arguments and expositions of passages of the Scriptures were confirmed in the faith and established in the peculiar doctrines of the Church to which they belonged. It is a significant fact of the mental and spiritual attitude of our time that the printed sermon is coming again to its conspicuous place in the literature of our time and in the libraries of our people. The style of sermon, the model on which it is constructed, and the topic it discusses all may vary from the sermon of an earlier period—to use a familiar phrase, the evolution of the sermon from the days of Saurin or South to our day is very marked, but the theme is still the same and the object of its circulation in printed form is

today what it was in the early centuries. The Scriptures still need exposition, and such exposition as the scholars and students are able to give. Doctrines held by Churches still need argument to enforce and illustration to illumine them, and the Holy Spirit can use the printed sermon to accomplish these ends. If the secular press can furnish sermons much more should the religious press.

The Wesleyan Advocate Pulpit—at the suggestion of an honored member of its Board of Trustees, Mr. B. B. Crew—opened in February, 1904, a new department known as “Wesleyan Advocate Pulpit,” in which should appear once per month a sermon from some distinguished minister. The Advocate Pulpit for 1904 was occupied, as this series shows, by some of the most eminent ministers in American Methodism. Assurances of appreciation of these sermons on the part of the readers of the Wesleyan Advocate reached the management from a number of sources. These assurances, together with the character and merit of the sermons sent out through the columns of the paper month after month induced the management to put them in permanent form, that in the homes of our people these distinguished ministers of the Word may continue to preach to the people the everlasting Gospel of the Son of God.

In sending forth this volume—the first of what we trust may be a long continued series, and the first series of sermons, so far as we know, ever sent forth by a Southern Methodist journal, the editors of the Wesleyan Christian Advocate wish to express their gratitude to the distinguished preachers for the unselfishness shown in the additional work of already burdened men in the preparation of these sermons as a willing contribution to the circulation of a wholesome

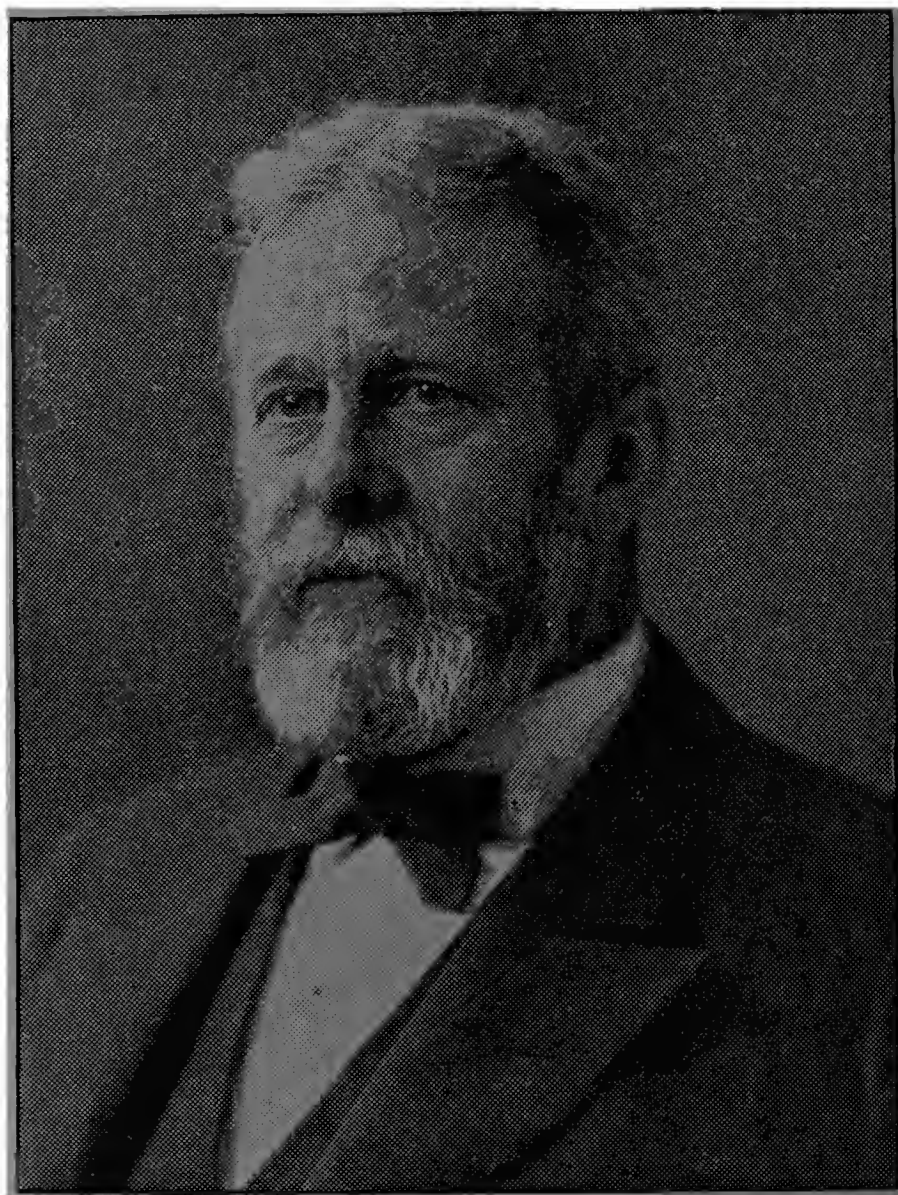
literature among our people. They have wrought for the good that might come of their labor.

And in sending forth the "Wesleyan Advocate Pulpit for 1904," assured that it contains much that is good and elevating, we pray the blessing of God upon the sermons and upon the readers of them—whether these readers shall be the thoughtful, cultured ones of our Methodism, or the humble poor, who without learning, yet know God and hunger for yet fuller and more glorious revelations of His will in Christ Jesus concerning them.

W C. LOVETT,
Editor.

M. J. COFER,
Assistant Editor and Business Manager.
Atlanta, Ga., Jan. 3, 1905.

The Church and The Family



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The Church and The Family.

Text: "And the Lord said Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I have known him to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord." Genesis 18:18-19.

"The Bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity." 1 Timothy 3:2-4.

These statements made concerning the Jewish and the Christian dispensations, the one of Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, and the other through Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, characterize the personality essential to the development of the Church. They do this in part by describing his adjustment to the Family, and thus teach that the Church, the family and personality are inter-related and retroactive.

The supreme thought of the universe is personality. "In the beginning God." Personality is also the extreme ideal for man. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God." Not personality segregated, but personality articulated is the objective. The development and main-

tenance of this is the chief service of everything in this world. Individual endowments and necessities, Divine institutions and providence all co-operate to further this.

The introduction of man into the Bible narrative is preceded by a peculiar emphasis of personality, Divine and human: "God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion.

In the image of God created He him."

Preparation for the Family was the next epoch-making event in the development of humanity. "The Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him an helpmeet for him. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh."

The third epochal event was provision for the establishment of the Church. The promise that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, was fulfilled, "when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, "through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

The individual is an element and the family is his primary organized relation, the nucleated center, the unit of humanity, while the Church, the aggregate of redeemed humanity, organized, is his most inclusive relation. Every person needs to maintain organic relations with the Family and the Church. Having the same author and a common objective, these are neither antagonistic nor substitutional, but supplemental and consequential. In them the individual finds full exercise for his normal functions. Through them alone is his

development of a symmetrical, articulated personality possible.

The order in which they are applicable to the individual suggests their relation to each other. The individual must have an existence before he can be classified or organized. He is first a part of the family and his family-life is intended to be introductory to his Church life.

A primal difference in the individual's relation to these two institutions is a matter of will. He is born into the family without his volition. During the years of his minority the will of others is his law. His attitude is one of acquiescence. As confidence, knowledge, the power to will and to do develop, his attitude changes to that of co-operation with the will of his parents. Parental authority exercised in love, directed by wisdom, is essential to the Family. "I know that Abraham will command his children and his household that they may keep the way of the Lord." Let the overseer of the Church be "one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity."

The individual is born into the Church through his own will performing the supreme act of consecration to and acceptance of Jesus Christ, as his Lord and Saviour. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."

But the will which determines the relation of the individual to the Church is that of a rational being. There are, therefore, certain antecedent conditions essential to the right use of this self-directing energy, which it is a function of the family to develop. The family is the intermediary between the individual and the Church, and

the development of personality is the common solicitude and beneficent care of both.

The Church of God is the fellowship of the holy, the living body of Christ as it exists in the world, that body of persons called by Him out of the world and associated with Him in the world to realize and manifest His idea of humanity, entered voluntarily, through faith by regeneration, manifesting the spirit of Christ—love, ministry, sacrifice—maintaining unity and seeking catholicity. It is based upon blood relationship and solidarity of interests and object, as is the family.

“It is essential to Christ’s humanity that it shall complete itself in the true humanity of all His brethren.” As the Family consists in the mutual relations between the parents and the child, so the Church consists through the oneness of men with God. It is a human brotherhood begotten through the divine Fatherhood. Its functions, like those of the family, are instruction, edification, enlargement. Love, ministry, sacrifice are essential to proclaim and expound the truth, to nurture and develop the household of faith, to awaken and convince, bring to repentance and acceptance of Christ those who are without.

“Where there is no vision the people perish.” Humanity is saved through its visions. The Church must interpret with spiritual insight, communicate with patience and devotion, and conserve with loving zeal, the clear vision of divine ideals and human duty. In a sense the Church is the articulate conscience of Christianity. One of its chief offices is to be voice and witness and guard of duty. It is the business of the Church to quicken the conscience and emphasize the duty of all who

hold the great, the divinely committed trust inseparable from the parental relation.

It is essential that every soul shall be renewed in the spirit of his mind. While the grace of God works mightily to the regeneration of the most hardened sinners, if repentant, its normal office and greatest work is constructive, quickening the child, directing him in holy living, and safeguarding him from criminal actions, unholy desires, impure thoughts, occupying his whole nature until he comes "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Children are partakers of the covenant. The promises are "to you and your children." "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." It is significant and suggestive that the Christian Church in Apostolic times was organized so frequently in the family.

The family is neither an accident nor a convenience, but the normal result of marriage. It is not made for the child any more than the child is made for the family. They are a joint product, each of the other. The child is the third element, as essential to the existence of the family, as the family is indispensable to the child.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." When the environment had been elaborated and peopled with the lower and subsidiary forms of life, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion." This likeness was not to be in their physical form, for God is a Spirit without body or parts, but in their being partakers of the essential nature of God, the Eternal Spirit, who hath life in Himself and who is Love.

The manifestation of life and love is in creative and

directive energy. In the image of God created He man, "male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it and have dominion." This blessing of God was given to Adam and Eve, His image was in them and its manifestation was through them conjointly.

The man hath not power in himself, and the woman hath not power in herself, but the man and the woman whom God hath joined together have been the fruitful parents whose creative and directive energy is manifest in the teeming generations which have multiplied and replenished the earth in all ages. As the united head of the family, the parents embody life and love and are the image of God's creative and directive energy.

Love is that pervasive passion which is constructive and assertive in its desire to bless its object. It finds its satisfaction only in ministries and sacrifices which further this desire. When expressed, it is a joy ineffable; when suppressed it is paralyzing and unbearable. The Divine love surged with longings unutterable till He created man, the antithesis of Himself, absolutely helpless and dependent upon Himself, into whom He might pour His overflowing fulness and find expression for His passion to bless. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." "For the joy that was set before him, Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself becoming obedient even unto death," (Philippians 2.6.), "that He might purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, (Titus 3.14), i. e., "present the Church to Himself a

glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies." (Ephesians 5:27, 28.)

The essential spirit of marriage is the self-surrender of each as an expression of personal love for the other, by which each enriches, ennobles and enlarges himself and herself in the sacrifice. Love becomes atrophied, but is unappeasable without this unrestricted expression. "Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh."

The necessities of the race, and these always interpret the purpose of God, require that marriage shall be more than a temporary contract for convenience, terminated by the interests or whim of those who may be designated as the contracting parties; it involves the fabric of the social order, human destiny, the Divine purpose. The Divine purpose of marriage is to secure the continuance and development of the race in the likeness of Himself, to evolve personality, not dwarfed nor enervated but symmetrical, so started, articulated and developed as to approximate the ideal.

"The formation of a strong, pure manhood is achieved only by the process of self sacrifice, and self surrender." This is furthered by establishing a dual oneness between husband and wife, quickened into fullest expression by the child raising it to a trinity where love finds its highest human manifestation. If the race is to be developed this is the simplest practical conception, the unit of humanity.

Marriage is a status created by a contract between

one man and one woman, founded on distinctions of sex and affection, exclusive and obligatory during life. Its legal dissolution is possible only by authority of the State and the annulling of its moral obligations only on the criminal violation by the other party of its essential principles of purity and loyalty. Its normal expression is the family, its natural environment is the home.

The family is the sole institution which has survived the fall. The tendency of social development through the ages has been to oscillate from an ultra and dissipating individualism to an extreme and paralyzing nationalization. The family is the strongest barrier to these disintegrating processes which, moving in one direction or the other, would reduce to their lowest terms all intermediate combinations or institutional forms. "But for marriage, holding the family intact, all that is valuable, virtuous and desirable in human existence would long since have faded away in a general retrograde of the race." Society develops or declines directly and consequently as the integrity and autonomy of the family are strengthened or disregarded.

It persists wherever man is found. In Greece it was regulated by social custom, in Rome by legislative enactment, among the Jews by ethical and religious obligations. The moral lessons earliest and most frequently taught the patriarchs, the prophets and people of Israel were not the privileges nor rights, nor value of the individual man or woman, but the place, the power, the duty of the Hebrew family in the covenant and plan of Jehovah. The disintegration of the tribal relations in

the Jewish development emphasized the integral character of the family.

The germ of a true family life was restored to humanity in the promise to Eve after the fall. Its growth was quickened by the hope begotten through Abraham. The law of Moses gave it support and protection, the prophecies purified it and gave it a peculiar sanctity, while as Newman Smyth says, "In the teachings of Christ the temporary expedients and imperfect conditions of the Family blessing are removed and at last, grounded in the essential morality of the law, arises the institution of the Christian Family."

The various family relations are used of Christ to enforce and illustrate the Divine relations to man. His childhood attitude was one of mingled subjection to His parents and devotion to His Father's business. His first miracle was wrought at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee. The gem of His parables portrays the attitude of the devoted, forgiving Father towards His prodigal Son,—exactng, dissipated and returning, and towards the unloving brother,—unsympathetic, sordid and cynical. He teaches that God is our Father and a husband to the widow, that the Church is the bride, the wife of Christ, that He is the Son of God, "from whom every fatherhood in Heaven and on earth is named," and the great consummation of the generations and millenniums He sets forth as the home going to the marriage feast of the Lamb.

The structural and inclusive idea of the family is love. Love, which is the spirit of ministry and the parent of self-abnegation, whose joy is in the blessedness of its object, whose occupation is service and whose

measure is sacrifice, here finds its tenderest and most varied expression. The innate function of the family is to furnish the conditions within which the parents and the child may be aided through ministries and sacrifices of mutual love to noblest personality.

The condition of the child when introduced to complete the family is startling and his function is suggestive. He comes as a babe the least capable, the most helpless, but with the greatest demands of all the creatures of earth. He cannot walk, nor stand, nor feed himself. He cannot focus his eyes, locate sound, nor formulate speech. He has no experience, observations, nor knowledge of any kind to serve as material for thought, nor any power of consecutive thinking. He has neither love for others nor self. He is without the moral sense, devoid of character, wanting in every element of a self-directing personality, and without self-consciousness. He is an aggregate of unorganized, undeveloped, but almost boundless possibilities and insatiable desires, absolutely dependent and indescribably needy. Every element of his multiplex nature requires food to nourish it and exercise to develop it. The food must be adapted in quality and quantity to the waste and growth of his system and to his power of assimilation, and every exercise must have motive and conditions.

The extent of these requirements is suggested if we consider any well developed personality and remember he has nothing which he did not acquire under conditions largely provided for him. His body, weighing one hundred and fifty pounds, more or less, has increased from six or eight pounds. He has consumed, say, eight hundred pounds solid food, fifteen hundred pounds

fluids, and eight hundred pounds of oxygen, that is, about twenty times his weight, or one and one-half tons, annually. The provision and its preparation during his childhood were beyond his possible command and had to be furnished him without any compensation, other than the joy of ministry and hope of his development. Yet it never failed any one of us.

This suggests the least and simplest form of his need. His skill of movement and his endurance; his varied and detailed knowledge; his power and processes of thought; his desires and their regulations; his responsiveness to and strength of love; his discrimination of motives; his majesty of will; his perception and selection of ideals; his enlightenment of conscience and loyalty to it; his courageous persistence; his enthronement of God, his recognition of the rights and his ministries to the needs of others, in their various and varying relations; these and all the elements of his personality have been developed from the merest germ or aptitude, through persistent nourishing, illustration, experiment, compulsion and co-operation, which he had neither the will to command nor the power to provide.

At his advent, this helpless, dependent babe found the world preoccupied and was confronted by resistance and antagonism, within and without. Every force of nature was active. Every organism, down to the tiniest bacillus, protozoa and cell, was busy, selfishly busy seeking to modify its environment to serve its purpose. The battle of life was on. Everything with life was under compulsion to assimilate or to be assimilated. Everything, with one notable exception, was in process of adjustment, disregarding him except as an object of

recaption. His right to develop the highest organized personality attainable, gave him an indubitable claim upon the united love of those who were responsible for begetting him. This claim was inherent and indisputable. While the race is perpetuated through children, the protection and development of the child is not less necessary than to beget him. His parents required his coming to complete the family, of which he is an integral part. He was centered in their hopes, affections and life, and they greeted him with a personal, parental love.

He came supplied with a surplus of tissue, stored ready for him to use, until he could become accustomed to his new conditions. Within the first few days he lost in weight, but commenced to fit himself to the environment parental love afforded him. Guarded and aided by their influence he gained experience and commenced to grow.

The communication of life and the provision for expressing love which God made when He created humanity, has its image in the sublime function of the marriage relation every time a babe is born into the world. His need is inexpressible, his dependence is absolute. His parents as author of life and source of love are the creative image of God to him. Nothing but love can meet his necessities. Father and mother are never more normally nor joyously occupied than when nurturing their offspring, if they accept it from God and seek to train it for Him.

The child's ministry to its parents is as gracious and constructive as their ministry to it. Their's is conscious and purposeful; its, unconscious and persuasive. What

a revelation of God—His Fatherhood and providence; what a vision of the mysteries of life, the responsibilities, the privileges, the joy of loving; what a transfiguration of self in serving, sacrificing, joyful and self-forgetfulness; what subtle suggestiveness in the mute, persuasive appeal for protection and providence to the instincts of parenthood every time the miracle of a new born immortal expands a home into a family and links it to Heaven! None know but those who have had the experience. There is a pervasive ministry in the consciousness which baffles description, but always lifts those whose wedded oneness finds this interpretation of love to a higher plateau than they occupied before.

The family is the great school. It includes both the kindergarten and the laboratory of love. In it the children and parents are both teachers and taught. It is the most universal in its presence, the most constant and inclusive in its influence of all social institutions. It comes into closest contact with persons of all ages and both sexes. Distance, weather, social distinctions are not obstacles to its work. Mutual attraction, community of interests, the instincts of parentage, ambition to perpetuate their name, as well as parental affection, have been subtle, predisposing conditions, but the necessities of the helpless infant in which the love and ambition of its parents focused has been the determining cause in the development of the family. That anchored the predatory parents to a local habitation, and stimulated to purposeful activity the instincts of protection and providence. That elaborated the home and the school, the laws of property and inheritance in their complex but well articulated details. The concentric

circles of human development and Christian civilization reveal that in the prophetic activities of His creative plan, as in His earthly ministry, our Lord "set a little child in the midst."

The parent's influence precedes the dawning of every virtue or any vice. The child is shut in the home and for a time has nothing of ideal, possession or trend which it does not absorb or develop there. He has no other chance for choice. He embodies the spirit there revealed and the ideals there enthroned before he has any perception of their moral character. The atmosphere in which he unfolds contains the gospel he embodies. He is plastic, imitative and acquisitive. Rousseau said, "The first year of life is in every respect the most important." In the first five years he acquires more and makes greater development than in any similar period of his life. It is not the occasional so much as the steady dominating order about him to which he responds. Commands to be good can never be made the substitute for exemplified goodness. "Religion, if effective, cannot be a separate subsistence occasionally introduced. It must be pervasive, regulating and sanctifying all events. Not simply summoned to soothe in times of affliction and adversity, but blending with the merriest moods and shedding sweet glories on those moments when the loved ones meet and affection, gushing from warm and full hearts, sparkles in the gleams of pleasant wit and humor." It is not family worship, but family religion, the life the father and mother mingle with their prayers, which are only special notes in the harmony of their daily living, that is effective.

"We are learning that the character of the individual

is largely but the expression of the Family from which he comes!" The latest social science seeks to purify the slums by elaborating settlements or organizing centers of home life and pure ideals. The family is not only the school of character, it is also the citadel of either virtue or vice, of Christianity or the reverse. The parents should train the child by example and precept, by persuasion and command to obedience, the essential of discipline and government, to truthfulness, the condition of strength, to reverence the student attitude, to loyalty to parents and God, in an atmosphere of love so pervasive, contagious and vital that he will embody, respond to, and reflect it as the law of the family.

All this should be accompanied and enforced by scriptural instruction. Children need and respond to systematic thought and teaching. The family affords the great opportunity to incorporate Christian principles with the very texture of child life when the tissues are being formed. Childhood and youth afford the psychological condition most favorable for conversion. Then, if ever, "while the evil days come not," is usually laid deep and broad the foundations of pure and noble Christian character. Those who are taught systematically the catechism and hymns of the Church rarely, if ever, leave the communion in which they were thus trained, "It is not the testimony of the world that as a home swings away from the creed, it swings nearer to God."

The covenanting character of infant baptism provides for the development of the Christian life as soon as the moral life begins. "The family is the connecting link between the baptismal font and the communion table." The sacrament of the Lord's Supper, typifying the ful-

fillment of the Passover, relates to the restored family of God. The Passover antedated the Levitical Law. The home was the temple, the feast was the object lesson, the family the participants and objective. "The home teaching of the Hebrews was intended to produce a regeneration of character in the children, to make them Jews inwardly as well as outwardly."

The Christ spirit of the home should register itself in domestic conversion, leading the children to the Lord Jesus and into the path of life before they have wandered in the path of sin. "It will profit our children but little to cling to the traditions of their fathers and have the name of Christian, if they are ignorant of the great inward reality, the inward and spiritual change." The parents "must nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." Instruction is construction. If by the exercise of his own will every person must come into vital relation to Christ and be renewed by the Holy Spirit, or remain under the condemnation of sin, it is essential that the children shall be trained for the kingdom. "If the divinely designated seed-time of life is neglected, there is most serious danger of all being lost."

The imperative obligation to make religious education in the family real, vital, potent rests upon parents and cannot be relegated to others or neglected without guilt. Character determines destiny and includes either heaven or hell. In a sense every parent so far as his child is concerned holds in his hands the keys to its character. "The father stands to his child through those supreme years, when reason is awakening and character is taking shape, as God. The child looks up and the first figure

he sees is the father's. In the tiny circle of that child's life the father is lawgiver, judge, providence. This is the reading of the parent's office which the Church has to enforce. This is the task of the Church, to interpret, nobly, wisely, incessantly, with fidelity, with courage, the great office and trust of parenthood, to teach all parents how early duty begins, how wide its scope, how transcendent its responsibilities, how supreme the rewards of success, how beyond speech or imagination the penalty of failure." (W. H. Filchett.)

Mrs. Browning says,

"The crystal bars shine faint between
The soul of child and mother."

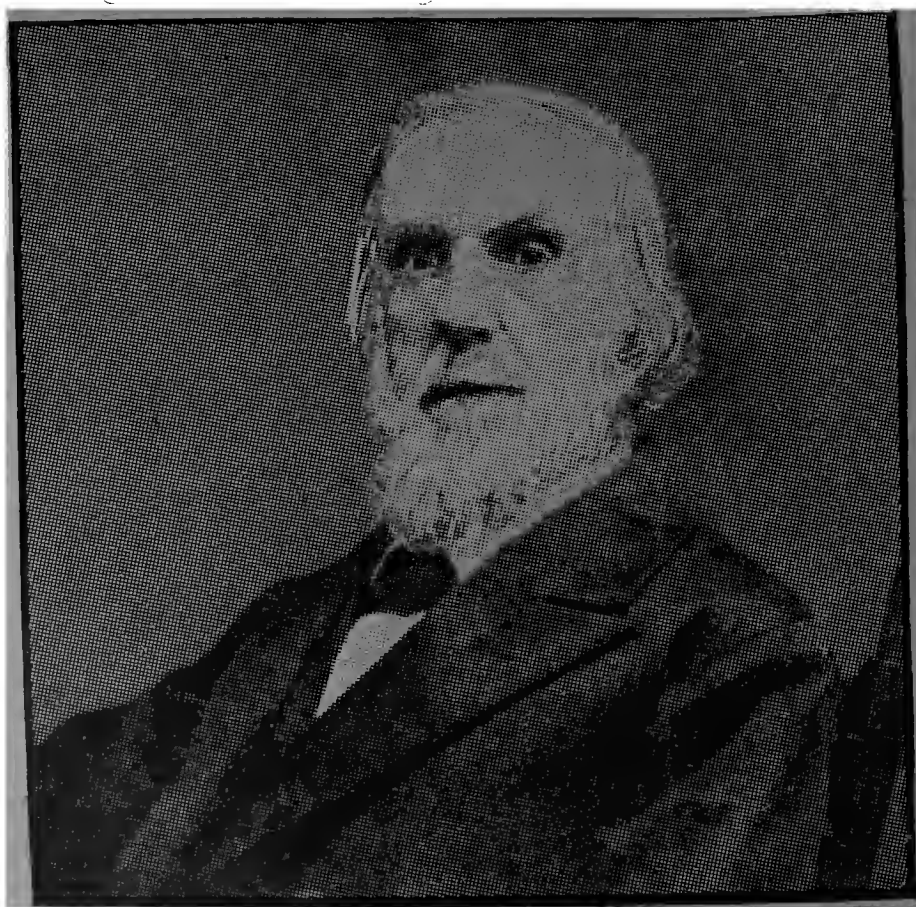
But she refers to the child in Heaven. How will the bars appear between the mother and her child whose life has gone out into darkness?

The child is given to its parents, and God says, "Nurse it for me." To the Church He says, "Feed My lambs." The transition from the nursery to the Church should be as natural as from childhood to youth. If the family function is faithfully performed, the time will come when the Church will do more by culture than by conquest. Richard Baxter says, "I do verily believe that if parents did their duty as they ought, the Word publicly preached would not be the ordinary means of regeneration in the Church, but only without the Church among practical heathen and infidels."

In the language of another (T. B. Applegate), "In the holy ordinance which makes of twain one flesh, in the abiding love and tender pity of parents for children, in the quiet and retirement of Christian homes, in the sweet

communion of the fireside affections, in the gentle restraints of the household, in mother's kiss and father's counsel, in the daily reading of the family Bible, in the silent breathings around the family altar, are the great springs which are to bear our children unto the Church and unto God."

Be Bigger Than Your Business



PROF JAS. H. CARLISLE, LL. D.
Emeritus President, Wofford College.

Be Bigger Than Your Business.

Delivered Before the Graduating Class, Wofford College,
Spartanburg, S. C., June 5, 1904.

Text : Mark XV 1-15.

"And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried Him away, and delivered Him to Pilate.

2 And Pilate asked Him, Art Thou the king of Jews? And He answering said unto Him, thou sayest it.

3 And the chief priests accused Him of many things: but He answered nothing.

4 And Pilate asked Him again, saying, answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against Thee.

5 But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

6 Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

7 And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

8 And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them.

9 But Pilate answered them, saying, will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

10 For he knew that the chief priest had delivered Him for envy.

11 But the chief priest moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, what will ye then that I shall do unto Him whom ye call the king of the Jews?

13 And they cried out again, crucify Him.

14 Then Pilate said unto them, why, what evil hath He done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, crucify Him.

15 And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged Him, to be crucified.

Millions of readers have had the words of this Sunday-school lesson to pass through their minds today. It is touching to read the story, as told in parts by the four gospels. The efforts of the unhappy judge to avoid the desperate step which he did take at last, are pathetic. Four times at different stages in the trial the prisoner was pronounced innocent. Pilate sent Him to Herod, hoping that officer might finally decide the case. Failing in this, he agreed to scourge the friendless one, if that would satisfy their thirst for His blood. He then offered to the crowd, the choice between the innocent sufferer, and a notorious robber and murderer. After that, he publicly washed his hands, to show by a striking act, that he wished to be free from blood. Then, calling the prisoner with the crown of thorns on his head, when the merciless Roman scourgers had done their work, to stand by his side, he asked the maddened crowd to look at the man, hoping the sight might move them to pity. At last, he made the men clamoring for their victim, say that the blood might rest on them and on their children. It is painfully clear, that Pilate did not wish Jesus put to death. He really wished to release Him. Yet the record reads, "And so, Pilate willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged Him, to be crucified." The word willing here may mislead the reader. It has undergone an unfortunate change of meaning. "I will to do that." These words, with emphasis on the first verb, have an energy of purpose in them. But we put the two verbs together, sinking the first into a helper to the other, throwing the act into the future. "I will do that," and softening that into "I'll do that." John says

"Pilate sought to release Jesus." A few weeks later, Peter told the murderers to their faces, "Ye denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go." Pilate sought to release Him, determined to let Him go, with a condition. If this could be done without loss or risk to the judge, it would have been done gladly. The record really means more than that Pilate was passively willing to please the people. He willed to please them, he made up his mind to please them, he determined in any event, to make it all right with the people—this being the real meaning of the words. Perhaps this incident may furnish some thoughts, to fill up the last Sunday hour in the college life, of the young people now before us, under circumstances of peculiar interest. The chief moral of the incident for us, lies on the surface. It is dangerous to let lower motives have place where great issues are involved. Second and third rate appeals should not be considered when first rate questions are discussed.

Several questions usually meet young people as they leave college. Students often ask each other, in lighter or more serious words, "Well, what do you expect to do when you leave here?" Or, with that directness, that they use when in earnest, the question may be, "What do you expect to be?" Even the young know that being is more than doing, and must go before it. And yet to others, it is only by doing that we can show our being. What we are, is known by what we do, conduct shows character. What then is to be your calling, your business, your life work? That question can not be put off any longer. It is possible that the friends of education in their zeal, have sometimes struck a false

or exaggerated note in their warnings against a money standard of life. We are told that it is better to make a life, than to make a living. This is a valuable half-truth, like most maxims, if it is not torn from its other half. In many cases, it is not possible for a young man to make a worthy life, unless he is making a living. The late Dr. Joseph Cook was thirty-five years of age before he had to think of the money side of his life. His good father was able and willing to relieve him entirely of this charge. He could go through his Academic, College, Seminary courses here, and then spend several years in the old world, making a noble life which was to ennoble other lives later, while his father met all his wants. Perhaps it is well that most young men have to meet the prosaic question of making a living, at an earlier age than thirty-five. Unless the demands of shelter, food, clothing, books, and the conveniences of life, are met for you, in a way that you can accept with self-respect, you must meet them at once. You will not be so weak, so unwise, as to neglect them, leaving board bills unpaid, "taking up goods without the probability of paying for them," yet all the while flattering yourself, that you are making a life. The occupations open to young men and young women are multiplying rapidly. You have a wide circle from which to make a choice. Let the one selected touch directly some of the wants and interests of your fellowmen. Let it involve some round of daily duties, which will help to build up your own character, and to express that character to others. Do not let it be a mask to hide, or a casket to bury, your inner, real self. Never consent to be only a business man, or only a professional man. The man is

more than the tradesman. The called is more than the calling. Paul was more than the tent-maker, as Luke was more than the physician. Victoria, the Christian wife and mother, was more than the queen. Robert E. Lee parted with none of his greatness when he laid aside the starred uniform of a general. To succeed in any calling is only a means to a higher end. That end is to upbuild, to enlarge, to enrich, a pure, strong character. In these days every business has its weak and dangerous points. The keen competition, the restless spirit, the brilliant prizes that seem in reach of the daring, and unscrupulous, try the souls of those in the current of strenuous life. Walk in your integrity, in the numerical, as well as in the moral sense of that word. Do not be contented to be a part of a man, even a brilliant fraction, a sparkling fragment of a man. Walk erect in your integrity, in all the full sweep and scope of a complete manhood. Coleridge says there are two Bibles in reach of every man, the written volume, and his own daily work. "The trivial round, the common task," of your calling, may be to you a fresh volume every day.

Another question closely connected with that of your life work is, "Where shall I pursue my chosen calling?" That question has far-reaching results. You will be influenced by your surroundings. And the community will be influenced by you. You will be a stronger or a weaker man, because you live in a place, and that place will be richer or poorer, in several meanings of these words, because your home is there. If you choose a city life, you must become used to care-encumbered men passing you on the pavement, with as little recognition or sympathy, as is shown by the heavily laden dray

horses, as they pass each other in the streets. Town life, village life, country life, all have their own peculiar features of helps and hindrances. In any case, you will be affected by your environments. "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere." These words of the sacred historian, taken in connection with the after-history of Lot's family, have been the text of many a warning against the hasty choice of a home because of some alluring features.

Your place being chosen, you will find yourself surrounded by many circles of different sizes, beginning with a small one of special friends, wider ones, for other friends, well-wishers, acquaintances, strangers, and the great world around. In every complete life there is in the center a very small circle, consisting of two persons, holding for life the tenderest, the most sacred, the most influential relation, which two human beings can possibly hold from choice. This subject is too often referred to in the spirit of jesting and banter. In no such mood is it approached tonight. The decision of that question will be a distinct crisis in your life. It will be more than that. It will be a crisis in the lives of two persons, and of two families. A happy selection here may outweigh some mistakes in settling other questions. But, if through haste, ignorance, or folly, you err at this point, no possible success in other fields can give you the happy home for which you long. Tupper, in his "Proverbial Philosophy," has these lines worth quoting:

"If thou art to have a wife of thy youth,
She is now living on the earth;

Therefore, think of her, and pray for her weal,
Yea, though thou hast not seen her."

This is not cant or barren sentiment. It is sober, religious common sense and wisdom. Let one appeal be made with all possible emphasis. She has a right to demand from you the same uprightness, honor, integrity of character and life that you expect to find in her. Let no inferior motives enter into your decision of any one of these three pressing questions. A great American preacher has a sermon on "Help from the Hills," from the text, "I will look to the hills whence cometh my help." You may think this rather a poetical or picturesque treatment of the verse, but it is reverent and suggestive. Draw your motives, comforts and helps of all kinds, from the highest sources. Keep all the upper windows open to let in the purer light. The lower motives, like the lower appetites, are clamorous, but they must be kept in their right places. These may be divided into two classes, the one craving wealth, and the other fame. The difficulty here is that neither of these spring from a feeling that is wrong or sinful in itself. To wish for a competency is not a weakness or a fault. It is a healthy feature, in any good man or woman. The great danger lies in the abuse of this proper feeling. Here we may find in our New Testament another instance of the wrong use of the word. Paul speaks of those "who will be rich." He does not mean those who may come to be rich hereafter. He means those now willing to be rich, planning, resolving, determining to be rich, believing their lives will be failures if they do not become rich. Paul says, these men "fall

into temptations, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." As you go through life, with ears and eyes open, reading the newspapers, you will find Paul's terrible prophecy amply fulfilled. Drowning men are today struggling and sinking in "the loud stunning tide of human care and crime," that is deluging this money-loving land of ours. Long ago, the wise men said, "He that hasteth to be rich, hath an evil eye." Today, there are scores of private citizens who are richer than any of the Caesars ever were. And there are millions of tempted men today who need Paul's warning, as much as did any of the dwellers in Corinth or Rome. An old father is quoted as saying, there are two things with which a man should be chary and tender, his conscience and his credit.

A like danger threatens the man who hasteth to be popular, or is greedy for fame. The men, unhappy if the newspapers do not keep their names and deeds before the public, and if they can not continually "bat their names on the drum of the world's ear"—these men have fallen into Paul's snare and temptations. Here again it is the abuse of a natural feeling that is dangerous. Inspired men praise a good name, but not a great name. The confidence of those immediately around you is not to be despised. It is to be highly esteemed. Many a worthy man is known only in a small circle. His name may never be in print, until, perhaps, the county newspaper may give him a few lines in an obituary. But he has a good name, better than great riches. Our language seems to make little provision for such men. We speak of some men as famous. There should be

a word for all others, but the word in-famous becomes infamous, as if all men must be famous in a good or bad sense. It is well that few of our race earn either of these adjectives.

We turn at once to the sacred pages for examples of character. Let us see how Paul touched these two strong impulses of our nature, love of money, and of fame. He could say, "I know both, how to be abased, and I know how to abound, everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." As to popularity, we know from his history, that he might have said, "I know what it is to be cheered, and to be hissed. I know what it is to be popular and unpopular. I have been welcomed into a town, and I have been driven out of the town, as a wild beast. I have had admirers to crowd around me, fawning on me, ready to worship me as a superior being, and in a few hours I was left for dead on the ground, with a shower of stones all around me." At one time, where the highest ranges of duty in perilous times were involved, Paul could boldly declare, "But with me, it is a very small thing, that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment." Yet again, when the question of reporting a collection, with which he had been entrusted, came up, he takes care "That no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us." And again he writes, "I rejoice that I have confidence in you in all things." He valued a good name more than fame. Let no unworthy motive urge you to covet the public ear or eye. The best way to gain confidence or consideration is to deserve it. This you can do. This you must do, or your character and

life are failures. Take great care of character. Reputation will then take care of itself. There are rare times in which reputation must be endangered, or given up entirely, to save character. Character is never to be given up to save reputation, or even life itself. The duties of life are higher than life, is a good maxim. Both of these clamorous desires for wealth and fame come from one source, the pride of life, which the Apostle John dreaded. Or, using the speech of common life, we may say that both come from selfishness. In our own language, there are more than four hundred compound words, each beginning with self. You may recall Faber's fine lines:

“O, I could go through all life's troubles singing,
Turning earth's night into day,
If self was not so fast around me, clinging,
To all I do or say.”

Depend only on the highest motives, when you contend against selfishness. Let not self “shake the wavering balance” in a critical moment, and any common moment may be critical. In all deliberative bodies, there are some questions that must be decided without argument. It is so in the life of every deliberative person. Often in common life there may suddenly spring up from within, or from without, suggestions that must be laid on the table without debate. Many have read the popular story, in which a Scotch physician is called to see a patient, when a dreaded disease is striking at his vitals. “He has not sinned against nature, and she will stand by him now in his hour of distress,” were the brave and hopeful words with which the good

doctor began his weary, anxious, successful night watch with the sufferer. He who has not abused his nature will come with great advantage to a stern crisis in his life.

There is another question, still more important, where unworthy motives are dangerous. In a few days you will receive your diploma. The date which it bears will place you in proper connection with our Lord's birth. Whenever you write, however hurriedly, the figures 1904, you take your distinct relation to Him, in the strange world of time, the ceaseless flow of minutes, and centuries. You link your life with His earthly life. At the moment when that diploma is handed to you, your attitude towards Him, in your affections, heart and will, places you in your true relation to Him, in the stranger world of character. You link your moral being with Him, or you are arrayed against Him. No human being we suppose can ever hold exactly the same relation which the unhappy Roman officer bore to our Lord. But every intelligent being must hold a critical position in this respect. In this supreme question of fidelity to Him, let no smaller motives have any place. Ignorant men misrepresent the great interest of religion. Unfair men treat it very unfairly. Narrow men dwarf and distort it. Even sincere believers do not always embody it worthily, or attractively, in their characters and lives. Let none of these painful facts as they meet you in life, turn you away from the greatest subject that can claim your attention. To accept the offer of Infinite love, for the purification and perfection of our nature—this is the great end of life to be kept in view. Let that decide your creed, your Church rela-

tions, your standards of daily living. Enter into no Church membership from unworthy motives. Let no unworthy motives keep you without.

Pilate had no prejudice against Jesus. He knew that for envy the Jews had arrested Him. He was anxious to rescue Him, if it could be done with safety to his own office and salary. His feelings really were, "I will dismiss the prisoner at once, if you will let me." Think of a judge in our day, with a question fairly within his discretion, where the rights, even the life of an innocent one are involved. Instead of consulting his law books and his conscience, he leaves it to the votes of the crowd gathered around the court house at an exciting trial!

To add to the tragedy of this trial, a person who knew far more of the prisoner than the judge did, took a shameful part. The heathen judge timidly said, "I find no cause of death in Him, I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go." A few hours before, a Jew, one of the inner circle of His family, went to His enemies who were at a loss for the means to secure their victim quietly, and safely, and surprised them by his bold offer, "What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?" Here was the greater sin. Renan, the brilliant French skeptic, remembering that Judas was the treasurer of the band, says, "The treasurer must have slain the Apostle." Such slaying, such assassination, may take place in every age, in every country, and in every Church. The danger is greater, as the Churches grow in numbers, wealth, in array of offices, perquisites and plants. The official slays the Apostle, the minister, the Christian. In secular life, the same deterioration and degradation of

character may follow. The money drawer, the bank account, may slay the upright merchant, the fair-minded lawyer, the skillful physician, the brilliant statesman. See to it that your calling, whether sacred or secular, does not slay the Christian or the man.

Pilate was afraid of the crowd more than he was of doing wrong to an innocent man in his power. And he was afraid of a man, as well as of men. "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend!" This was one of the closing appeals that decided him. If he must give up one, Caesar or Jesus, he could not hesitate, or rather, he made a wrong decision, after painful hesitation. He seemed to come so near to reaching one of the highest points in human history, and yet, he fell so far below it. Perhaps, myriads of higher intelligences were looking on the scene. Certainly, through all the ages since, men have been looking back to it, with painful interest. Yet he failed. He let lower motives rule the hour. He made the great refusal to do right. If he had given way to the highest motives, as the worst that could possibly have followed, he might have been the first Christian martyr, anticipating Stephen's crown. Let all possible alleviations be given to Pilate's conduct. Compared with Herod, he deserves some praise. That vain official led the way, in the shameful treatment of the prisoner, by the savage attendants on his court. No charge of that kind is laid against Pilate. Compare Pilate with one of his successors a few years later. Felix left his innocent prisoner Paul in bonds for two years, hoping that a bribe would be offered for his release. Pilate never stooped to that low plane. He did not say to the eager crowd, "Pay me my price, and I will sign the

death warrant at once." On the other hand, he did not say, "I will pay you liberally, if you will let me release the prisoner." Motives not of the most ignoble kind may be unworthy. They may show a weak character, and, when indulged, may make that character still weaker.

History tells us that Pilate lost Caesar's favor in a few years. We do not know his end, the accounts varying between the death of a lonely exile, and that of a wretched suicide. A touching incident, not connected with our main current of thought, may be mentioned. There is no record of a harsh word ever spoken to Jesus by any woman. A few hours before this trial, as He was led along His sorrowful way, through the darkened streets, some Jewish women, meeting Him, gave Him the tribute of their tears. And the anxious, hesitating judge must have been startled when a servant from the palace hurried into the court room, with the abrupt message from his wife, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things this day, in a dream, because of Him." Mothers and wives spend many lonely hours, in palaces and cottages, with busy hands and burdened hearts, suffering many things in dreams, by day and by night, because of the loved ones out in the perilous walks of life. How many household tragedies might be avoided if husbands and sons would listen to their tender and timely appeals! As we look back, knowing the two chief parties in this trial as we do, it startles us to hear Pilate say to Jesus, "Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not, that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" The test of character is not in the possession of power,

but in its use. A great mystery of life, perhaps we may say the great recurring mystery of human life, is that power is so often lodged in unsafe hands, as we reckon them. Are we surprised, that in the troubled times of Roman history, a court officer had power to utter these strange words? Look at something stranger still today. A private man, standing in the blaze of Christian civilization, when two thousand years have done homage to our Lord, can say with fearful emphasis by his daily life, "I have power to defy Thee openly before men, to take Thy holiest names and attributes and scatter them through my common talk. I can challenge Thee every hour in the day, to show Thy might, by crushing me. I can, for my amusement, crucify Thee afresh and put Thee to an open shame. And this strange power, I will use to the utmost, wherever I wish." This painful feature of the trial may be repeated in the lives of thoughtless men. We may feel like repeating a question, which Pilate asked, when he saw the strange, causeless rage, against the blameless one, "Why, what evil hath He done?" Profane men, young and old! What has the Divine Son, or the Divine Father, done, to receive such treatment at your hands?

You have perhaps seen a young man give up one safeguard of character after another, to please the little college crowd. It was as if you could hear him say to his associates, "I bring from my home some respect for the Bible, the Sabbath, and the Church. What will you give me to deliver them up to you? I think you ought to pay me well, for it costs me something to do this. I must crush all the impulses and instincts of my better nature, and it will pain my good parents, if you let them

know the bargain we make. What will you pay me, by your votes and your applause, to give up all these ties, and come down to your level?" Have you ever known that young man to gain the respect and confidence of the men that bought him? No, you have not. You have sometimes known a young man to give the substance of Nehemiah's manly answer, "I am doing a great work, and can not come down to you." Have you ever known that young man to lose the full confidence and respect of the men who could not buy him? You never have. You will not readily find a community where solid, consistent character is more respected than on a college campus. Yet, young men, there are sometimes weak and make sad mistakes. A student once said frankly, "I thought I could let the Christian side of my character go down without injury to the other part, but I now see my mistake."

This fear of men, of crowds, works in different directions, keeping men from following their higher impulses and again from following their lower. The shrewd men who were sent to meet Jesus were afraid to say that John's baptism was of men, "We fear the people, for all hold John a prophet." At one time the chief rulers were impressed, and felt like following Jesus, "but they loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God." The parents of the man born blind, were afraid of being put out of Synagogue, if they said much about the wonderful healer. His enemies were afraid to seize their victim openly on the feast day, for fear of an uproar among the people.

Pilate's difficulty recurs in the life of a man today. "I will enter the Church circle, if my companions will

let me. I do want to be a Christian, but I want, still more, to be popular with those who are not Christians." To please them, the double minded, unstable man, goes his devious, downward way, unsatisfactory to both parties, and more unsatisfactory to himself. The word Pilatism has been used to represent that exact type of man. He never reaches the point where he can say, "My heart is fixed." Some Caesar is his master, his tyrant. He lives in fear of the threat, "If you do this, or do not that, thou art not our Caesar's friend."

There is a great clamor, wise or unwise, just now, about education. Public and private beneficence, Church and State, are pouring out their treasures in its behalf. At such a time, those young people who have had special privileges should be object lessons, arguments incarnate, for education. It will be unfortunate if now the schools and colleges send out streams of young people who "transgress their education," proving it to be useless, perhaps even hurtful. They should show that their training has freed them from the rule of lower motives, and lifted them up into the higher liberty of being the bondsmen of duty for life. They escape from the occasional, incidental, "you must" of children and pupils, to come under the ceaseless, ever-present, "you ought," of intelligent, responsible beings.

Those now passing from the stage, look with interest on the young who are girding themselves for the work of active life. A young man passes through his academic and college life with a fixed purpose. His means have been limited. He has had to stop for a year, at intervals, to raise supplies. At last, he graduates, with a debt over him, which is to be paid from his first earn-

ings. With his eye on other fields to be won, he pursues his studies and his work, making a living while making his life broader and higher. With noble self-repression, he denies himself many social outlets which he would enjoy, and pushes his way onward and upward to his desired end. On such a young man, older men look, not with interest only, but with admiration. When the student, neither over-rating nor under-rating his abilities, with humble trust, throws himself for the future confidently on the beneficent laws that guard society in its best estate, believing that some appropriate harvest will follow this prolonged, faithful sowing—this is a heroic type of character and faith. Let him throw himself more confidently, farther into the future, relying on the sure laws that prevail in the higher realms. Will not his character take on a still nobler, higher, purer type?

The bodies of Caesar and Pilate are turned to common dust. Their names are used chiefly to point a moral. The prisoner at Pilate's bar died, and rose again, to die no more. Of His kingdom there shall be no end. His name is most honored in the best nations, and by the best men and women living today. He rules the world on a plan far beyond our knowledge or our thought. He will guide the young man or woman, entering life, and asking for guidance and light. It often happens that graduates who have finished their course, without surrendering to the highest demands of duty, take that critical step in a few years after leaving college. The shock, when they strike the hard problems of manly life, sobers them, humbles them, strengthens them, and they become as little children.

Their proper education, in the highest sense, then begins, as they go humbly yet hopefully, to meet the great unending future.

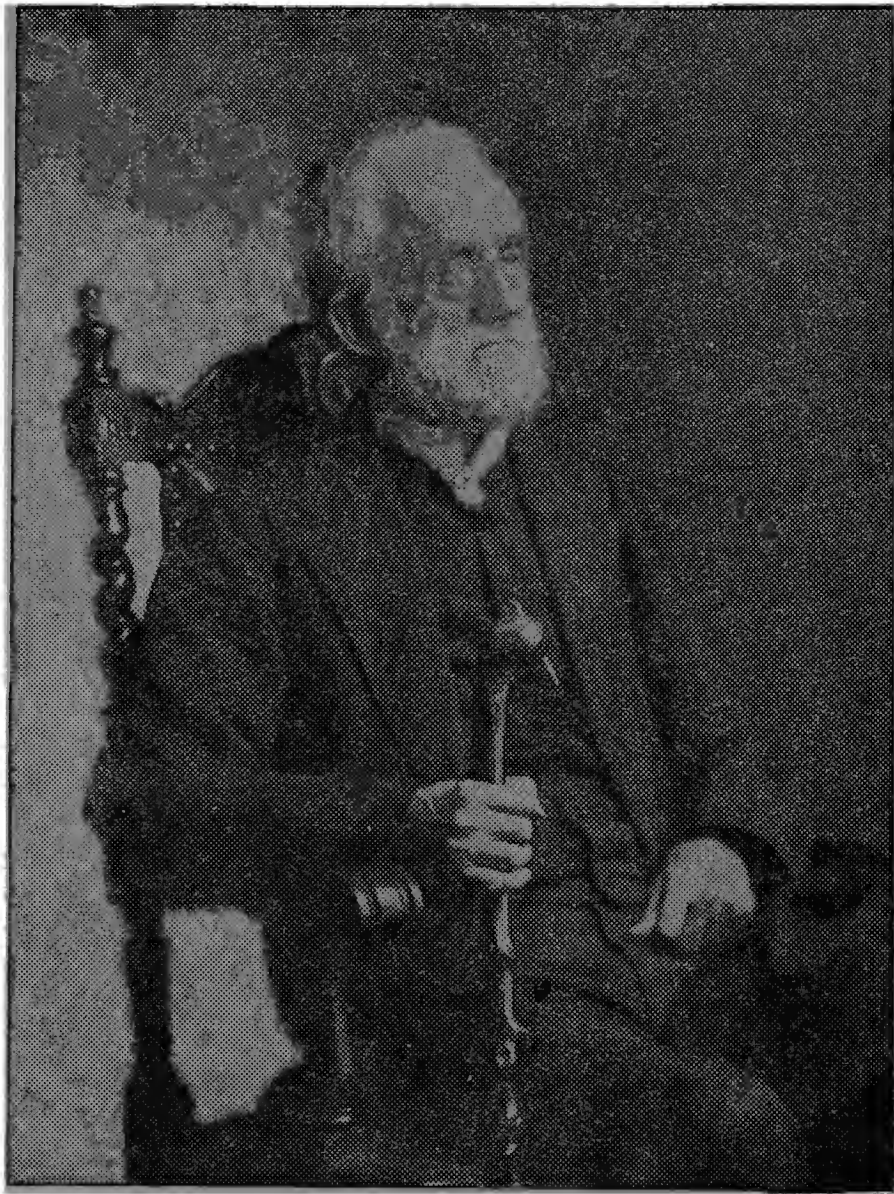
A thousand years before Pilate, a saintly, though not a faultless man, in a meditative mood, dared to express a great hope, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." Yet he seems to be startled at the thought of connecting perfection with his felt wants and limitations. He then recalled a ground for great thanksgiving, "Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever." Nothing less than forever enduring mercy could meet his forever enduring needs. He was on the border of a great conception, which human language can not try to express without the words breaking down in contradictions; a finite creature forever approaching the forever unapproachable Father of spirits, and lover of souls. His baffled and anxious heart found outlet in a great prayer, "Forsake not the work of thine own hands." We may think of the good man as saying, "I can not bear to think of being left forever a useless, unfinished piece of Divine workmanship, with the Divine signature becoming fainter; or, to be thrown aside in the rubbish of the universe, a forsaken work of His own hands."

Pilate asked, "What is truth," and would not wait for an answer. Let us learn the lessons of his fall. His mysterious prisoner was, and is, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Young friends of the graduating class: To recall this hour in your lives, and to move your thoughts to hope, to thanksgiving, and to prayer, take with you, to be repeated frequently, daily, if you will, these inspiring words of David in the last verse of the 138th Psalm:

The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me,
Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever ;
Forsake not the work of thine own hands.

Holiness Now and Forever.



BISHOP O. P. FITZGERALD, D.D.

Holiness Now and Forever.

Text—"Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, forever." Psalm 93: 5.

By Bishop O. P. Fitzgerald, D.D., M. E. Church, South.

The reign of God in creation and providence is the august theme of this ninety-third psalm. The Almighty God, Creator and Ruler of the universe, is here represented as wrapping his attributes about him as royal robes, seated on the throne of universal dominion. He is clothed with majesty and strength, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. The visible phenomena of the universe are the insignia of his majesty. These are his vesture, the outbeaming radiance of the infinite God. But, argues the psalmist, God is greater than all his works: "the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters; yea, than the mighty waves of the sea." Behind the visible creation is the infinite Creator himself. This is the argument presented in this psalm from which is chosen the text for this discourse: Seeing that we are dealing with such a God, the attitude of our souls and the course of our lives ought to exhibit the reverence, the adoration, the love, and the obedience which constitute holiness—the holiness of the heart and the holiness of the life. The force of this argument must be perceived by all reasonable minds and profoundly felt by all devout souls.

The word "house" in this text may be properly used in a two-fold sense: there is ample warrant in the Holy Scriptures for so doing.

First, the building itself, the house of worship, is holy; in a peculiar sense it is God's house. In the language of our ritual in the dedication of a house of worship it is "set apart from all unhallowed and common uses to the worship of Almighty God, for the reading and expounding of God's holy word, for the administration of his ordinances, and all other acts of public worship." We need such sacred structures here on earth. There is so much that is discordant, distasteful and distracting that we long for a respite from the commonplace and secular. From the sights and sounds of a world marred and untuned by sin we need a sanctuary, a retreat where we can be quiet, where we can breathe a purer air, and hold communion with things unseen and eternal. In the city this need is more strongly felt than in the country, where the glorious temple of the universe is open to the worshipper. I have stood in the holy silence of the giant Calaveras forest in California, and felt as the little Christian woman who stood by my side expressed it: "Here is one place where God will be worshipped." I have stood on the beach of the world's great ocean, the Pacific, and watched the breakers as they rolled in upon the shore, and was lifted to the adoring contemplation of the infinite One whose wisdom is an ocean without bottom or shore, whose ways are past finding out, whose mercy endureth forever. I have stood on the point of Lookout Mountain and gazed upon the wonderful scene spread out around and below in Tennessee and Georgia, the sky-piercing peaks, the rugged cliffs, the smiling valleys, and

winding river—and felt like praising God for his greatness and goodness in the language of the ninety-fifth psalm: “O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a good God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.” I have stood awe-struck in the presence of Niagara’s tremendous plunge, and worshipped the Lord God, “who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance.” Amid all such scenes we feel as if we were in the very presence of God their creator. But in the man-made city we need comely, well-appointed houses of worship. The costliest building ever erected on earth was the temple built by Solomon at Jerusalem, every part of which, even to the minutest detail, was according to a plan and specification furnished by God himself. The noblest use to which a house made by human hands can be put is the worship of God. When the members of a congregation become able to build beautiful and costly dwellings for themselves, they should not grudge a liberal expenditure for the house of God. But it has been one of the glories of our Methodism that it has hitherto been more anxious to provide neat and comfortable houses of worship for the masses than to build costly and showy

edifices for the few. We are, I trust, still moving on this line. While the unchurched, dying millions are starving for the bread of life, our Church has no call to enter into any esthetical rivalry with others. We must still see to it that the poor have the gospel preached unto them, in obedience to the gospel commission under which we live and move. We must bear in mind the fact that the one supreme object of the Church is to "spread scriptural holiness over these lands." We need not confound beauty with holiness, though they are not antagonistic one to the other. But holiness is the paramount purpose in all our work; the beauty of holiness is that which is essential. All our church edifices built for God and dedicated to Him and set apart for His worship are holy: their walls, their roofs, their pulpits, their pews, their floors upon which the worshippers kneel—all, all are holy.

Holiness becometh the worship in God's house. Mark the expression: the worship. Congregations come together not for mere social contact or esthetic enjoyment, but for worship. The end sought in every part of the worship is holiness. (1.) The preaching should make holiness its theme and present its attainment as the chief duty, most exalted privilege and supreme glory of a Christian life. The preacher should magnify holiness as an attribute of God, and insist with awful earnestness on all that is involved in man's relation to such a Being. All levity and coarseness, irreverence of all kinds and of every degree, are condemned by this text. In this sacred place the preacher stands as the ambassador of Christ, and he should not disgrace his Master. He stands here as a watchman, and he must be faithful. He stands here in the presence of those whom he will meet at the final

judgment, and he must not shun to declare unto them the whole counsel of God. (2.) Holiness becometh the music in the house of God. Sing hymns, not ditties nor doggerel; sing hymns, not didactic essays in verse; sing hymns, not vapid sentimentalities. Sing praises to a holy God with a heart panting after holiness. (3.) The prayers in God's house should be directed to the same gracious end. An indispensable element of true prayer is a sense of God's presence—not in bodily form, nor in visible symbols merely, but where there is genuine faith His actual presence in the demonstration of the Spirit and power. Holiness becometh the attitude of the worshippers in the house of the Lord. This may seem to some to be a small matter, but it is not without significance when properly considered. Acceptable prayer may be made standing, sitting or kneeling, if the attitude of the soul be humble and trustful. But something is due to decency and order. The kneeling position is not awkward or unpleasant when one is used to it. The moment you take this attitude, you feel more like praying; it is nature's own prompting; it is comely and helpful.

Secondly—and chiefly—holiness becometh the worshippers themselves. Beautiful and costly church buildings, eloquent preaching, artistic music, kneeling multitudes, all are vain unless the worshippers themselves are saved from sin. Personal holiness is the supreme object to be sought in all the work and worship of the church. The one essential beauty is the beauty of holiness. The one and only work of the church is to make men holy. For this Jesus died; for this He intercedes; for this the Holy Spirit is given; for this and for this alone, is the gospel preached. We ourselves are "the temple of the living

God.” This is a personal question for each and all. Holiness becometh the soul, that house in which there must be an indwelling Christ. What is our personal relation to this matter? When God looks at your heart, what does He see there? This is the question of all questions for each and all of our people. This means holiness in the present tense. The “indwelling Christ”—ponder the words, ye professed followers of your Lord. Get a fuller understanding of their meaning, a fuller measure of the blessing they promise—and all in the present tense. There is no other tense to be considered in this connection. Now is the accepted time: now is the day of this salvation. Holiness now and forever is the keynote of our song. We must awake, and claim the fulfillment of the promise of our God, or become a worldly, unspiritual people, despite our numbers and temporal resources. Each one of the multiplied thousands and tens of thousands of our Methodism must lay hold of this hope set before him, or forfeit the power and joy of the life that is hid with Christ in God. O brethren, you have heard all this before; but these are no idle words. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. The brother that holds the pen that traces these lines has no controversy with any, no desire for partisan propaganda. But he believes with the sincerity of undoubting conviction and feels with an intensity too deep for words, that if our religion does not mean holiness, it means nothing. Let us then prayerfully consider the truth, and gladly claim the blessing our Lord so freely offers.

We will take the apostle Paul’s definition of what New Testament religion is, as expressed by him in the clos-

ing verse of that golden chapter, the thirteenth of his First Epistle to the Corinthians: "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: but the greatest of these is love." This is the right rendering of the words: so all the authorities worthy of respectful consideration agree. Faith, hope, love abide—the present tense makes the passage shine with a heavenly splendor, and pulsate with life that is divine. What he means to say, as it seems to me, is about this: Of our religion Faith is the root; Hope is the blossom; and Love is the fruit now and forever.

Yes, Faith is the root. Without Faith it is impossible to please God at any stage of Christian experience. It begins when the new life begins, and abides with it forever. Faith is based upon the promise of God. By faith God's people have "obtained promises" in all ages. Faith believes what God has said, does what God commands, lays hold of the hope God sets before it. There is no provision for doubt in this gospel of Christ. Its promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, as the apostle Paul declares in the first chapter of his Second Epistle to the Corinthians. When I pray for my own soul, I do so because God has promised to answer my prayer. When I pray for my friend or neighbor, my intercessory prayer rests on the same basis, the promise of God. When I pray for the church, it is the same. Nothing we can ask has our God denied. The root of a tree is no more truly a part of the tree than faith is an essential element of a true Christian life, in every part. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," says the holy apostle in the same connection. That is to say, faith is the vital principle, the essential

reality now, of that which in its final perfection and completeness shall constitute the riches of the eternal inheritance of the child of God. The prayer of faith, backed by the promise of God, is therefore as strong as omnipotence. There is nothing impossible to the power of God, as there is nothing forgotten or unwise in the promises of God. Holiness is wrought in answer to the prayer of faith in accordance with the promise—and the blessings keep coming in the same way, the blessing of pardoned sin, of the new life that is thereafter lived by the faith of the Son of God, of the grace that renews the believing soul day by day, and perfects holiness in the fear of God. Study the meaning of that expression, “perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians vii: 1) —take its meaning as it was intended to be taken, and then go on with a faith that “abides,” in the path that brightens more and more at every step.

Hope is the blossom of the Christian life, and it also “abides.” As the blossom precedes and passes into the fruit, so life is related to Christian experience. Hope is not lost in sight, as an old saying goes: it is not lost at all. All the things which God gives that are pure, lovely, and of good report here on earth, remain as abiding elements of Christian character; and thus in a sense not strained but graciously true, this hope is in a present tense that is never lost. This is the hope that maketh not ashamed, because it does not fall below what is promised, nor fail in any emergency, nor lose its power with the lapse of years. The faithfulness of God and the fulfillment of his promise now guarantee all that is promised and hoped for hereafter. And how graciously certain is made all that is to come by the witness of the

Spirit now. "Therefore (says St. Paul) being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience, and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans v: 1-5). Yes, thanks be to God, **his love shed abroad in our hearts now in its fullness** and sweetness precludes the possibility of doubt that every good thing promised for the future will be given unto us.

Love, we see, is the greatest of all—the fruit of that tree of which faith and hope are the root and the blossom. If asked for a definition of holiness in a single word, the answer is: Love. We cannot rise higher than this. When Christian experience reaches this level, there is an end of controversy; all things are done "without murmurings and disputings." This love is not easily provoked; when it gets beyond the disputatious stage, it cares nothing for the "mint, anise and cummin," the trifles and quibbles that seem so large when there is more of partisanship than love in the heart. There is a strange power, not of earth, in this gospel of love. Our spiritual fathers preached it, felt it, gloried in it, and made all this land glad because of it. The next great revival that is coming will bring this same message and sing this same sweet, glad song.

This is our religion: a faith that lays hold of the hope set before us, and holds on to it; the hope that blossoms

anew in the new life that never ends; the love that is the greatest of all. The command and the promise are in the present tense.

We wish for what is lasting as well as for what is beautiful—and holy. We are hastening on to the world of spirits, hoping that there our companionships will be with holy beings forever. Let us get ready to join that blessed company of which the risen Jesus is the center and the joy. The raptures of heaven are but the full consummation of the blessedness of holiness on earth. Holiness yonder means holiness here. Holiness forever means holiness now. The command and the promise are in the present tense. The obligation to obey, and the privilege of attainment, are in the present tense. Let holiness now and forever be the aim and watchword of the Church throughout all its borders, while it seeks a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost and a fuller measure of the life that is hid with Christ in God.

FACE TO FACE
WITH THE ETERNAL WORLD.



BISHOP E. E. HOSS, D.D., LL.D.

Face to Face With the Eternal World.

Text—2 Tim. 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

In order to get the proper setting of this passage, it is necessary to keep two facts in mind: First, that the letter from which it is taken, having been written towards the close of St. Paul's second imprisonment at Rome, is probably the last document that came from his hand; and, secondly, that this letter was addressed to the man who, above all others, was naturally like minded with him and dearest to his heart.

The reading of the immediate context will suffice to show that a special emphasis is to be placed on the personal pronoun I. See how easy is the order of thought: "But watch thou in all things; endure afflictions; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry: for I am now ready to be offered," etc. A brief paraphrase would run thus: "Inasmuch as I, on whom the care of all the churches has so long rested, am now an old and broken man, and must soon die, it is the more necessary that thou, who art younger, and hast the pros-

pect of many years before thee, shouldst be diligent and earnest in carrying forward the work which I have begun and which I now formally transfer and commit to thy hands."

Thus does the aged apostle write with all the deep solemnity of one who is face to face with the eternal world. Let us ponder his words in detail. The expression, "I am now ready to be offered," is much more accurately rendered by the Revisers, "I am already being offered." In what sense was this true? By the vivid exercise of his imagination, the apostle brings his approaching martyrdom out of the realm of future events and conceives of it as actually present. Nay, more than that, he thinks of the sufferings connected with his imprisonment; not only as leading up to his martyrdom, but also as constituting a part of it, the initial stages. It is worthy of note that the word "offered" means literally "poured out as a libation," the reference being to the drink offering of wine, which among the Jews was poured around the sacrifice, and among the Greeks was poured on it. This was a favorite figure of St. Paul. He uses it with great effect in Philippians 2:17, where he is asserting his unselfish love for his Macedonian converts: "Yea, and if I be offered"—my life poured out—"on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all."

In the expression, "the time of my departure is at hand," there is a repetition in different form of the general thought which we have just been considering. The word here rendered "departure," is not Exodus which means literally "a going out", and is sometimes translated "decease;" nor aphixis, the strict significance of which

is "withdrawal;" but analysis, which carries the suggestion of "release." The underlying figure is not, therefore, as some commentators have insisted, that of a guest who rises and slips away from the banquet before the other guests are ready to take their leave, but, rather that of a ship, which is just about to start on a voyage. It is as if St. Paul had said: "My long expected summons has at last come, and I must soon be off. The anchors are already lifted, and the decks are cleared, and the waters are rippling under the keel, and the breezes which shall bear me safe into the heavenly harbor, are blowing strong and steady through the spreading sails. For the last time, hail and farewell to the friends whom I must leave behind."

What was the mental and spiritual attitude of St. Paul in view of the close proximity in which he knew that he was thus standing to eternity? It was just what we should have expected of the man who sometime previously had written to the Philippians: "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." There was no sign of alarm or dread in his words, and none in his actions. On the contrary, he displayed the most heroic serenity of soul. The vast and mysterious future had nothing in it of which he was afraid. He felt sure that, here or there, he was equally the Lord's, and this persuasion steadied and supported him on the brink of time.

What did he do? First of all, he looked around him in the most matter of fact way imaginable. His normal relation to the world was not disturbed. Though certain that his remaining days were few, he went on day by day as if he expected to abide in the flesh forever,

still concerned in current events, and solicitous to discharge current duties. Herein is one main difference between true religion and fanaticism. True religion teaches us to accept our present lot, with all its belongings and attachments, as of one piece with our everlasting destiny. Fanaticism, on the other hand, seeks to breed within us a sentiment of indifference or contempt for the whole material and social frame-work of our probationary existence. What an immense contrast, for example, there is between the tumultuous agitations of extreme second Adventism and the quiet and holy interest which St. Paul continued to cherish in the world as the scene of his providential, though temporary abode, and the theater for those redemptory activities which engage the thought and heart of God.

If anyone doubts the truth of these statements, let him read and ponder the concluding verses of our chapter. To his beloved son in the gospel the apostle writes: "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me"—for my human heart is hungry for thee, and I long to see thy face once more. "Demas hath forsaken me"—and by his desertion when I needed him most, has inflicted a cruel stroke upon my spirit. "Only Luke is with me"—all other companionship has failed me. "Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." For this last sentence, let us be especially thankful: for it indicates that Mark, after having shown the white feather at a critical point, had rallied on himself and recovered his lost ground, and it also brings out the fact that the grace which had healed the breach between him and St. Paul, is a sovereign cure for all the alienations that may occur between christian men. "The cloke

that I left at Troas with Carpus bring with thee"—for I may be spared to go through another winter, and in that event I shall need it for my physical comfort—"and the books, but especially the parchments"—for the love of learning is not yet dead in me, and I wish to miss no opportunity for reading and writing.

And so go the apostle's commonplace and seemingly trivial directions right on to the end of the chapter. Was ever anything simpler? or anything more beautiful and touching? The man that could utter himself on this wise at such a time was not a visionary enthusiast, but a sober-minded Christian, whom no accident of time or place could jostle from the firm foundations of the faith, and to whom all acts, great and small, from the rapt and adoring worship of the invisible Father down to the humblest performances of daily life, even down to eating and drinking, were alike forms of service.

In the second place, the apostle looked behind him, reviewing his whole career, and passing his deliberate and candid judgment upon it. How confident his tone! What a majestic ring of triumph in his voice! "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." (R.V.) This is all the more remarkable when we consider that the apostle had always cherished the humblest estimate of himself and his own work. It was none other than he who wrote to the Corinthians: "For I am, the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church." It was he likewise who wrote to the Ephesians: "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

It was he finally, who wrote to Timothy: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ-Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

So widely different, in fact, is the apostle's customary judgment of himself from the exultant confidence which he displays in our text, that many of the critics, who seem ever eager to find contradictions in the Scriptures, do not hesitate to say, and to back up the saying with a great parade of ponderous learning, that the second Epistle to Timothy is not of Pauline origin because it simply could not have been indicted by the same man who gave to the Church the unchallenged letters of the apostle. Was ever reasoning more fallacious? Who that is versed in the things of the Spirit is not fully aware that believing souls, especially when they are as many-sided as St. Paul was, are certain to swing backwards and forwards through a wide arc of experience? John Wesley's case is in point. In the earlier pages of his Journal, he wrote many hard and bitter things of himself, and did it honestly, going so far as to say: "I went to Georgia to convert the heathen, and behold I was a heathen myself." But after he became an old man, and was competent to interpret himself and his history more profoundly and, therefore, more truly, he added foot-notes here and there, to bring down these severe and biting sentences of self-condemnation, and recording it as his final conclusion that even in those raw and immature early days he had "the faith of a servant, but not of a son." Nay, have we not all been acquainted with weak and timid women whose self-distrust was such that they scarcely dared to call themselves Christians at all, but who, when

the end came, found the heavens ablaze with light around them? So did St. Paul, when he surveyed his whole life from the vantage ground of its closing days, have the holy assurance, that, in spite of his manifold shortcomings, he had been all along a sincere, and upright, and loyal follower of the Master.

To be more particular let us mark the several clauses of verse 7. "I have fought a good fight," literally, "the good fight"—for the Greek has the definite article. It should also be observed that the language is agonistic or athletic, rather than military. The whole clause would be better rendered, "I have striven the good strife," or, "I have contested the good contest." Expanded to its due proportions it may read, "coming down into the wide arena where victory is to be won or defeat endured, I have met and vanquished every foe that dared to array himself against me. The struggle is over, and I have naught else to do except to wait for my dismissal."

"I have finished my course," literally, "the course." The more general agonistic metaphor now passes into the specific one of the course or the race?" Chrysostom asks: "How has he finished his race?" and answers the question by saying: "He has gone around the whole world"—the Roman world. In Acts 20:24, the apostle declares his purpose to do what he is here able to speak of as actually done: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy." His high aspiration has been turned into achievement; and he views it with the most intense satisfaction. Like a trained athlete he had entered the track in his young manhood, and under the eyes of God, and angels, and

men, though often covered with dust and often ready to faint, he had run the race to the end. The goal had at last been reached, and the ceaseless strain of nerves and muscles was all a thing of the past.

"I have kept the faith." The word "faith" denotes here as it does in so many places, not the act of a living man, but the whole body of Christian truth—"the faith once for all delivered to the saints." It had been entrusted to St. Paul as a sacred and inviolable deposit, and as such he had kept it. In the face of many temptations to deny it or disown it, he had held it fast. Never once had he consented to give up any portion of it. Knowing it to be the greatest of all treasures, he had clung to it more tenaciously than the miser clings to his hoarded gold. Everything else that men count dear he had surrendered—wealth, social position, ecclesiastical standing. His poverty was so extreme that he would have suffered for the necessities of life, had it not been for the contributions sent to him time and again during his confinement by the Church of Philippi; so extreme that it was a matter of importance with him to recover an old cloak which he had left years before at Troas. As far as earthly property was concerned, he was stripped naked and bare. But he still held fast to the true immortal riches. Living or dying, he was determined that nothing should cause him to relax his grip on that great possession.

In the third place, the apostle looked ahead of him, peering as far as his eyes could penetrate into the unending future. What did he see there? "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," etc. If he was confident as to the past, he was jubilant as to the

future. No doubt distressed him, nor caused him to draw back. He rejoiced in the firm conviction that he was going to his great reward. This reward was "laid up" for him, reserved under conditions of absolute security. It was nothing less than "a crown." There are two Greek words so translated. One of them is diadema. It denotes sovereignty. The other, which is here used, is stephanos, literally, "a wreath or chaplet." It symbolizes not sovereignty, but joy or victory. Such a wreath or chaplet was given to the successful contestants in the Greek games and to Roman generals who returned from conquests in foreign countries. The metaphor is frequent in the Scriptures. St. James says: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." St. Peter says to faithful shepherds of the flock: "When the chief shepherd shall appear ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," literally, "the amaranthine crown," one that does not wither and die on the brow, but remains in glorious beauty forever. In the passage before us the crown is described as "a crown of righteousness," a crown which is given as a reward for righteousness, "and on which, so to speak, righteousness has a claim."

This crown of righteousness is to be given by the Lord himself, and that, too, not capriciously, nor as a piece of favoritism, but in his capacity of "righteous judge," or just umpire. He who has watched the whole strife with open eyes will distribute the rewards when it is over and done. Every gift, in addition to its intrinsic value has another value drawn from the character of the

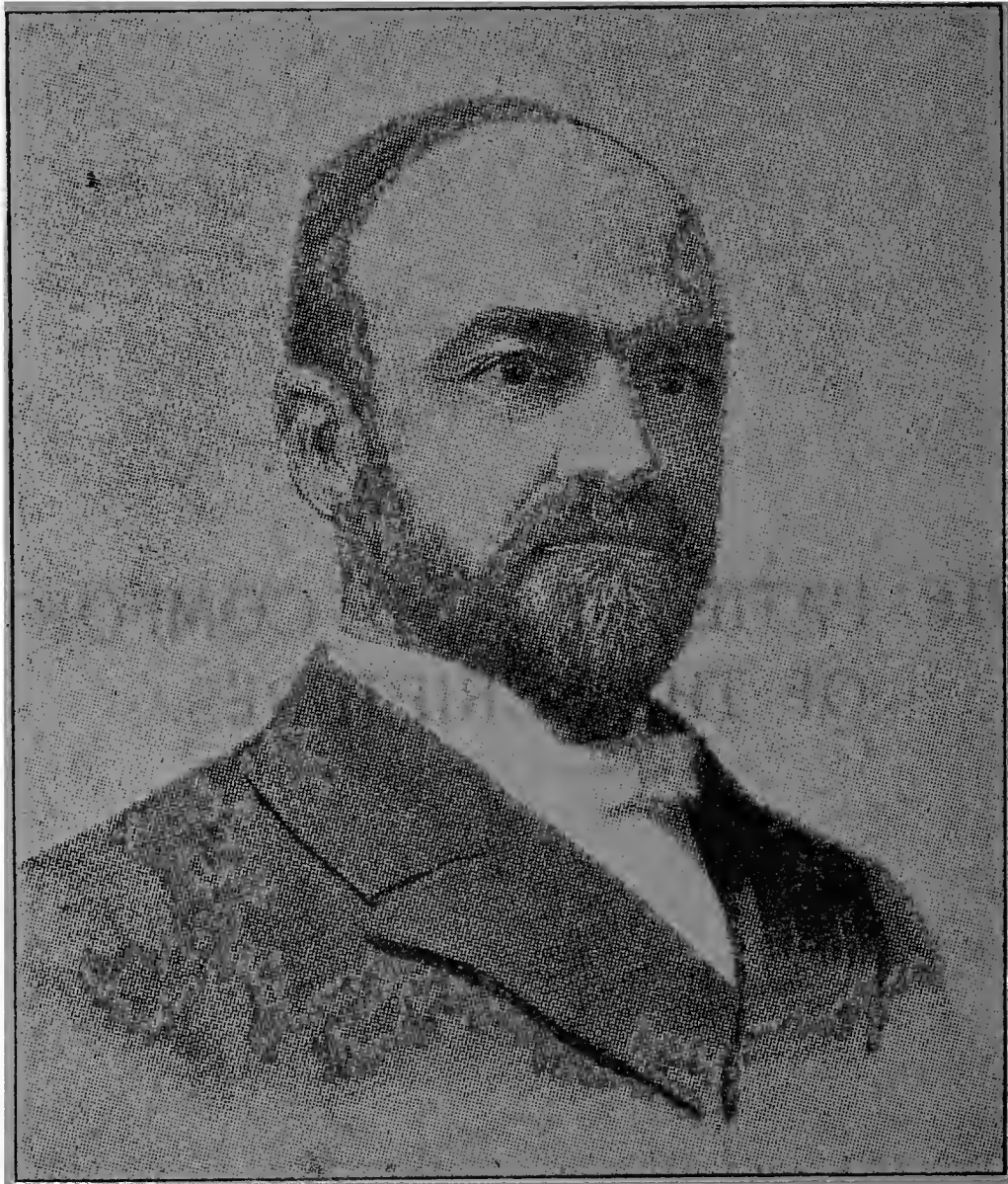
giver. You may see a little band of gold on the finger of a gray-haired woman, not counting for much as things are reckoned in the market, yet priceless to her because it was bestowed upon her in the golden days of her girlhood by the man she loved. You might be able to put an adequate estimate on any crown placed upon your head by the hand of saint or angel. But you can never tell the amazing worth of the crown which, if you are faithful, you shall receive from the pierced hands that were nailed in derision to the bitter cross.

And this great transaction is to take place "in that day"—that day of complete disclosure and final adjustment. It is to be an august event. Not hid away in some remote corner of the universe, but open and public, witnessed by all men and all angels. For myself, I shall care not much for the presence at my coronation of the saints of by-gone ages. But I shall be glad and happy if my dear parents, my brothers and sisters, the friends of my young manhood and of my later years, the brethren that have labored by my side in the Lord's vineyard, are there to see my triumph and to give their assent to it.

"And not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." It was impossible for St. Paul to detach himself in thought for a single moment from the whole company of the faithful. His great heart took fire and burned at the idea that a host of others were to share in his honor, even all those "who love the Epiphany or appearing of the Lord," and who, by that token, are worthy to receive His approval. In human races, one man only can win: he who gets to the goal first. But in this Christian race every man wins who keeps in the

narrow way and reaches the goal at all. Some will go in with a great dash of speed and an unexpended balance of spiritual energy. But most will use up every ounce of power that they can command, and fall, like soldiers after a fierce battle has been fought at the gates of the kingdom. Blessed be God for His grace to these feeble ones. Admission will not be denied them, nor commendation withheld from them. They had much to contend with, great weakness to overcome, immense obstacles to surmount. But they too shall be crowned as well as those giants of strength who strode through the world indifferent to its charms and unhindered by its opposition. O what a broad and Catholic gospel this is, and what waves of comfort its promises bring to every struggling soul whose face is set towards the eternal City.

**THE PATIENCE AND COMFORT
OF THE SCRIPTURES.**



BISHOP EUGENE R. HENDRIX, D.D., LL.D.

The Patience and Comforts of the Scriptures

—Or,—

The Bible in the Twentieth Century.

By Bishop E. R. Hendrix, D.D., LL.D., M. E. Church,
South.

Text: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope. Romans xv: 4."

Paul, "thou shouldest be living at this hour. The world has need of thee." But if denied thy presence we still have thy inspired words to aid and guide us in a time of intellectual ferment and confusion second only to the Renaissance, with its fresh discovery of the world and of man, and to the great upheaval of thine own day when Christ was to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness. Well might Monod say: "Imagine the world without St. Paul: it would mean the detention of the gospel, perhaps for centuries, on the borders of Asia, far from this Europe of ours, which Paul (after Jesus Christ) has made the center of the conversion and civilization of the world. Imagine the Bible without St. Paul; it would mean Christian truth only half revealed, Christian life only half understood, Christian charity only half known, Christian faith only half victorious." No disciple of Christ ever had truer reverence for the Scriptures or greater loyalty to Christ. In the epistle to the Romans alone, which Col-

eridge declared "the most profound work in existence," Paul quotes not less than sixty-one times from the Old Testament. He could not have been the great theologian of Christianity as Christ was its Founder and Foundation without such profound and reverent study of "whatsoever was written aforetime." Yet no one better understood at once both the help and the limit of the Scriptures than Paul. To his beloved son in the gospel Paul writes his last epistle and message: "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." It is thus that the Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation. They cannot save us, only Christ can do that, but they can both point the way and discipline us in righteousness.

Our religion is not that of a Book, but of a Person. Let Mohammedanism show what the worship of a book means in making religion a mere matter of observing the letter, a religion of the square and not of the compass, of precepts and not of principles, drying up all the compassion and tides of sympathy in the human soul, thus dehumanizing man and begetting that cruelty which is always the child of fanaticism. The Scribes and Pharisees in our Lord's time, wearing broad their phylacteries containing passages of Scripture which they wore about their foreheads and their arms, were so busy tithing mint and anise and cummin as to forget the weightier matters of the law as judgment and mercy and faith and (as Luke adds) "the love of God." They were like the priest and Levite actually coming from the tem-

ple service itself only to pass by on the other side on their return home to Jericho without a kind word or compassionate glance for the stricken man whom it was left to the Christ-like Samaritan to comfort. The Book is of value only as it leads to the Person. The Old Testament either leads to the Messiah or wastes itself in the Mishna and Talmud. Unless "they testify of Me" in vain ye think that ye have in the Scriptures eternal life, however much ye search them. Unless the rock gushes forth water it remains as barren as Sinai, which is desert. The consummate flower of the Bible is the Person of Christ and unless that is found there is nothing but leaves, mere literature even though it have a religious flavor.

Paul was hated scarcely less than his Lord because he dared point out the right use of the Scriptures as the very tree of life and not simply the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He who was the Truth was also the Way and the Life to them who found him. Christ was the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth. The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life. To find Christ in the Scriptures is to find His spirit also had to be guided by His example no less than by His speech. His example often best interprets His words. Christ had at once "purged all meats," by declaring that it is not that which enters into a man that defiles him, but that which comes out of a man. For, out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings. Paul is writing to the Romans who felt, as we can scarcely conceive, what Bishop Lightfoot calls "the ubiquity, the obtrusiveness and intrusiveness of paganism." Men

could not take office, or convey property, or make a will without burning idolatrous incense. The markets were filled with meats which must first be offered to idols before they were offered for sale. Must one, therefore, deny himself animal food because the markets probably contained none but what had been offered to some idol? Some declared that after all an idol was "nothing," and hence it did not matter. But others thought that they were compromised if they ate the flesh of animals thus dedicated. Paul while sympathizing with those who regarded the food none the less wholesome although offered in idolatrous sacrifices, and reserving to himself the right to eat it if he chose, nevertheless declared, "If meat make my brother to offend I will eat no meat while the world stands." Grant that the brother who may be offended is weak, all the greater is the reason for bearing with him. "Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying. For Christ pleased not himself; but as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus: that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now Paul shows his minute acquaintance with and deep reverence for the Scriptures in another quotation

which he makes, and this time from the shortest chapter in the Bible, the 117th Psalm, one liable to be overlooked because it is so small. Yet as a dew drop can mirror the whole heavens so this short and small chapter of only two verses mirrors the whole gospel of God as it proclaims, "Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and let all the peoples praise him." This language deserves to be put where Paul at once puts it, side by side with Isaiah's gospel which announces, "There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles. On him shall the Gentiles hope." The word hope at once calls out from the apostle a benediction for Jew and Gentile alike as he says, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that ye may abound in hope in the power of the Holy Ghost." Thus the end wrought by the Holy Scriptures is to come through the knowledge of the Son of God unto the unity of the faith because of a sure and well-grounded hope. Paul often exhorts to be like-minded but he recognizes that there are things infinitely more important than uniformity. Charity is greater, and liberty. Those who cannot eat meat once offered to idols must still believe in the good faith of those who can, and they who have no scruples must refrain from taunting those who have. To be one in Christ is not to share precisely the same creed but is to esteem one another highly in love for their work's sake. "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty; in all things charity." such is the motto of true discipleship in all ages. The kingdom that embraces Gentiles as well as Jews cannot at first be expected to reach rigid uniformity of belief or statement or conduct, but it must

resolve to bear each other's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ, even though it mean to suffer reproach as well. The Bible is not a Nehushtan to be worshipped, or any other fetich, like the Koran, to be blindly obeyed under pain of death. It is a loving helper to them that are weak, a lantern to their feet. The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple.

In our day new truth is breaking from God's Word as has not been the case since the time of Luther. More accurate knowledge of the languages in which it is written, of the land whose history it gives, of the Semites and their worship, of the religions of Egypt and of Assyria and Babylonia, of the manuscripts which help to supplement and correct each other, of the spiritual insight of gifted and devout expositors, all, all are ours as they have never been granted to any previous generation. As has been wisely said: "The advance of scientific discovery and the all-pervading use of scientific method are to us what the revival of classical learning was to the 15th century. Our wisdom is with the Reformers to use the fresh light, the new modern thought, to obtain and to hand on to our successors a fuller and clearer understanding of the Faith." No one more fully availed himself of the new learning in his day than did Martin Luther, as his expositions of the Scriptures show. John Wesley could never have led the great religious movement of his century without a genuine intellectual hospitality such as always belongs to the catholicity of true culture. Learned Biblical scholars amid much opposition undertook the revision of the New Testament a full century after Wesley had

published a revision of his own to which these later scholars acknowledge their great obligation. If over-zealous copyists have added aught to the inspired writings we should welcome any studies which may shake these interpolations from their usurped places. This only "signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain." Heb. 12:27. A devout Christian (whom I have known for forty years, while not accepting all his views as a specialist in science). speaking of Christian Faith in an Age of Science, uses these suggestive and comforting words: "To me it seems unmistakable that our age of bold investigation, of truth discovered too fast to be understood and co-ordinated, of doubt and unrest and agonized questioning, but of moral earnestness and loyalty to the truth, is ending in the return of faith. For the scientific questions of our age and of all ages touch not the central truth of Christianity, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

Paul's lot was cast in an age of conflicting opinions but his deep loyalty to Christ enabled him to mediate among those who but for such helpful leadership would have disrupted the early Church. Even as it was the faith of some was overthrown; but Paul exclaims, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: The Lord knoweth them that are His, and Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." Unshaken faith in Christ and an earnest effort after purity of life are the safeguards of the Church amid whatever storms of conflicting opinions. Never were these storms fiercer than in our Lord's own

day when the new wine threatened to burst the old wine-skins. "These sayings of mine" brought Jesus to the cross but they gave the world an intellectual new birth. The mission of Christ as the Great Teacher, and even Critic, was to show that the letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive. If the Bible is today the living Word of God it is due to the interpretation of Christ, and not of the Rabbis. He was first to teach that "whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." But it was only as the God of patience and of comfort that He interpreted. The patience and comfort taught by the Scriptures, whether in precept or example, whether in the experience and character of our Lord or of those who put their trust in Him either before or after His incarnation, are the inspiration of hope in devout hearts. "Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; in whose heart are the high ways to Zion. Passing through the Valley of Baca they make it a place of springs."

Well may we follow Paul in this right and comforting use of the Scriptures alike for instruction and strength. Like the Psalmist, he believed and therefore he spoke. Let us learn to believe with Paul, that we, too, may declare:

1. **The trustworthiness and world-wide and enduring value of the Holy Scriptures.** Paul's Bible was also the only Bible that Christ had, the Old Testament. It speaks much for the reverence in which it was held in the Jewish home of Mary of Nazareth that James the brother of our Lord writes and speaks like an old prophet. It was not until the resurrection of our Lord that either

James or Paul could believe on Him as the Christ and it needed a veritable Christophany in either case to effect such belief. Their eyes had been holden in reading the Old Testament in whose trustworthiness they had such confidence. In our gratitude for the four gospels, those according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we must not forget "the gospel according to Christ," which He recited on the way to Emmaus to those whose eyes were also holden. Who would not wish to have heard that greatest expository sermon ever preached as "beginning from Moses and from all the prophets He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself"? To Christ and to Paul the Old Testament was trustworthy alike as to its facts and its teachings, and was pre-eminently the work of "Moses and the Prophets." How long it had been in existence no one can definitely state. Holy men had been writing for a long time as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The holiest of them all, the prophets in whose inspiration we fully believe, men of courage enough to be mentors to kings and of such grasp of truth that they were not only the great preachers to their own age but to all ages, these men supplying what was lacking in the earlier documents, and for their better understanding, probably gave the older Scriptures their present form.

Possibly where, as in Luke's time, "many had taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning these matters," there seemed cause for this supplementary statement in the most spiritual of all the earlier books, that of Deuteronomy, among whose noblest utterances are the great speeches of Moses followed by what a later hand, of course, supplied, the account of his death. De-

vout scholars find traces of other documents in all the first six books of the Bible such as Luke describes as existing in his day about Christ. "even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word," thus bringing them under the historical canon which requires that the sources of history must be found in contemporary writings. Four such documents, like the four gospels (but in place of being separate, are found woven together) often giving parallel accounts of the same events as did the evangelists of our Lord's life, are traced by even conservative Biblical scholars who were chosen, because experts, to write on these subjects in such a safe work as Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible. Who wrote these documents concerns us less than the inspired prophets who used and thus authenticated them to us and to all ages. These writings made the Old Testament canon substantially as it existed in our Lord's day and which He treated with such reverence and sought to save from misuse. It is enough for us that in addition to their inner worth they are accredited to us by the authority of our Lord himself. So far from the Old Testament being "a millstone about the neck of Christianity," as Goldwin Smith declares, the ripest and sanest Christian scholars recognize it as the very Bible of Jesus Christ, both used and authenticated by Him. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The Scriptures of His day no more testified of Him than did our Lord testify of them, an authentication which He could not even give to the New Testament which remained to be written.

Sacred writings thus trustworthy have world-wide and

enduring value. What nourished the spiritual life of our incarnate Lord when He drew from His memory those passages in Deuteronomy with which to smite His tempter in the wilderness, His sole offensive weapon being the sword of the Spirit, shall never fail any who would work righteousness or resist evil. No lighthouse or searchlight ever threw its rays so far on the tempestuous deep as has this lighthouse of all ages. No voice of human genius or eloquence has ever sounded out so far as has the Word of God whose line has gone out through all the earth, and whose words to the end of the world. As books rise in the scale of excellence they tend toward exhibiting a permanence and universality of interest and discover qualities which appeal to the mind and heart of the race. Thus Homer and Dante and Shakespeare among the writings of uninspired men make their appeal to wider audiences than those to which they first sang. Yet by how wide an interval are these secular writings (which find so poor a translation into many languages) separated from the inspired Hebrew and Greek Scriptures which are making for themselves a language in every tongue of earth, touching unclean lips with fire until they articulate fit speech for God's truth. The book that for so many centuries has governed Christian legislation, has inspired Christian hopes and supplied the language of prayer and praise to Jew and Christian, that has been sweeter than honey in the honey-comb to countless millions in life and in death, that Book may be depended on as containing the hid treasures of wisdom and knowledge, of patience and comfort, so long as the race endures. Nay, heaven and

earth shall pass away, but the Word of the Lord endureth forever.

II. The test of the inspiration of the Scriptures is the measure of their revelation of God and of their moral helpfulness to man. The Holy Scriptures give no definition of their own inspiration, but they so satisfy the hearts of men by what they reveal of God's moral nature and what they impart of courage and comfort, the power to do good and the strength to resist evil, that they become a fountain of living waters. They are thus self-evidencing. Revelation is man's memorial of the divine inspiration. Where, and only where, God has inspired has man preserved in song or speech, in prayer or prophecy the unmistakable evidence. Every great religious movement or advance recited in the Holy Scriptures has begun with some individual and his deeper knowledge of God. That knowledge may have come through some call to suffer, as with lonely Abraham, or to work, as with stout-hearted Moses, who first endured as seeing Him who was invisible, the one educated and trained by a promise and the other by a command, but the revelation which such men have left us is vital with personal experience. Their names were first called by God before they became immortal on the lips of men. Such men saw God and lived. Only the pure in heart can see God and these men became so much purer and stronger for the vision as to be able to lead men in all ages to the place where they took off their shoes.

Mohammedanism claims to have an inspired book, as does Mormonism, its American double. But what is the character of the revelation in the Koran or the Book

of Mormon? Do men find in them eternal life, or even the rules of a decent life on earth? Is God revealed in them as a holy God, or one who panders to vice and whose proffered Paradise is an Oriental harem? Is man taught charity, forbearance, mutual helpfulness, truthfulness, mercy? The tender mercies, yea, the tenderest mercies of such books and their disciples are cruel. The test of who inspired them is given by our Lord when he said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Just as it was the peculiar kind of miracles that Christ wrought which brought Nicodemus to recognize that He was a teacher come from God, so the same moral qualities in the Book show its divine origin.

The God that answers by fire, He is God; and the God who so speaks in His Book that it becomes sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow and proving a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, reveals himself in the Scriptures which become at once the Word of God and of man. The Book becomes so vital with the presence of God and of men who walked with God that it almost possesses personal qualities as Paul speaks of the patience and comfort of the Scriptures. These sacred pages seem wet with tears and blood, or vocal with prayers and songs. They bend under the burdens of the weary and faint, or leap and rejoice with those whom God hath met in the way. They are transfigured by glorious Theophanies whether on Horeb, or Hermon, or grow sombre with the shadows of Cherith or Gethsemane. In them can be heard Elijah's shout of triumph on Carmel or his wail of despair at Horeb. In them we

hear in the night watches the innocent voice of Samuel or the sobs of David, the lamentation of Jeremiah or the victorious paean of Isaiah. Every true prophet seems to suffer vicariously for the chosen people of God. The broken home of Hosea was an object lesson to Israel of their infidelity to God who had espoused them and Isaiah's seared lips told of what he had suffered for dwelling in the midst of a people of unclean lips. These all prepared the way for the Messiah who was to rule over His people only by suffering with them as well as for them. Christ must become their Saviour before he could become their King. "These are but broken lights of Thee, and Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

A just and holy and good God is not the result of any induction. None by searching have ever found out such a God. He must come by revelation. In only one Book have we such a revelation. In other literatures men are better than their gods, freer from jealousy and rage and those unbridled passions that made great Olympus shake. It was easier to find a good man than a good God. By every token Socrates or Plato possessed moral qualities of a higher order than any god in the Greek Pantheon. They at least felt their limitations while the gods were simply unlimited passions, selfishness unrestrained, without patience and without comfort. The presence of evil and pain and sorrow in the world prevents us from arguing from character of the creation to the character of the Creator. It needed a divine revelation to proclaim the true character of God as "The Lord, the Lord, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy, keeping mercy for a thou-

sand generations, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty." It is such a patient and comforting God who becomes the God of hope. Only a God of infinite perfections could ever have been patient enough with Jacob, that most undesirable of companions to dwell with in a small tent. It was the gentleness of such a God that finally made David great, greater than his passions or his enemies.

The worship of the God of patience and of comfort taught men how to endure and how to be magnanimous, and made possible such a friendship as that of Jonathan and David, and such an elegy as David sang when on the high places the glory and beauty of Israel had fallen, and rejected Saul, despite his murderous and unspeakably wretched heart, was remembered only as the father of Jonathan the beauty of whose character irradiated for the time even the character of Saul. It is such a revelation at once of God and man, of God as He is in His immutable perfections and of man as God helps him to his feet and makes him a helper to his kind that authenticates the inspired Book.

III. Hope is the reward of a thoroughly-grounded and well-tested faith in the God revealed in the inspired Scriptures. A defective conception of God's moral attributes accounts for doubts about His communicating with man. What communication has mere Power to make, or self-satisfied Wisdom, which cause the Bedouin to cry thrice each day in the desert, "Allah-ill-Allah!" "God is God"? This simply means man is nothing since God does not need him. If God is lacking in sympathy, in mercy and in love is He really a Person? If He

is not a Person what communication has He to make and how can it be made? No wonder that the Unknown and Unknowable of the Agnostic chills men into despair. Agnosticism which rejects the revelation of God rejects God himself as capable of a revelation. Agnosticism is the confession of failure, the religion of despair, and is barren. Only a religion of patience and of comfort is a religion of hope and of fruit. Search all the literature of unbelief for such a message as Paul sends to the Thesalonians in the first epistle which he ever wrote: "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers: remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father." Paul's faith is so well grounded that he not only rejoices in hope of the glory of God, which he confidently expects to see and to share, but he becomes very daring, and says, "and not only so but let us rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost that has been given unto us." No wonder as he defies all earth and hell with his challenge, "who then can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus?" he needed to coin a word to express the completeness of the triumph of the believer as he says we are "more than conquerors." His jubilant words remind one of Peter's "abundant entrance," a veritable

“choral dance.” No gates are large enough for such returning victors; the very walls must be breached to let the triumphant sons of God come home. We are saved by hope which hope we have as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast reaching to that within the veil. Only the God of hope can cause us to abound in hope by filling us with all joy and peace in believing.

Both the Old and New Testament were experience before they became Scripture. They are deeper than any questions of mere dates or authorship. Prof. Robertson Smith whose advanced views have now been overtaken in Scotland knew the hope that was born of experience as he declared: “Of this I am sure, that the Bible does speak to the heart of man in words that come only from God—that no historical research can deprive me of this conviction, or make less precious the Divine utterances that speak to the heart. For the language of these words is so clear that no readjustment of their historical setting can conceivably change the substance of them. Historical study may throw a new light on the circumstances in which they were first heard or written. In that there can be only gain. But the plain, central, heart-felt truths, that speak for themselves, and rest on their own indefeasible worth, will assuredly remain with us.” The Scriptures mean nothing if they do not mean this, that God has been in the history of mankind from the beginning. In the steadfast purpose to keep this before men the Scriptures can afford to be silent about vast empires and great dynasties while they trace the

growing light that ultimately shines in the star of Bethlehem. Growing revelation cannot stop until it becomes a Person, the Son whom the Father hath sent into the world, the desire of all nations, and their Hope. Men who have gotten this vision of God in Christ can never be led to abandon permanently the place of the heavenly vision. Memory keeps this lamp burning in the darkest night of uncertainty and doubt.

It was this experience and comfort of the Scriptures in which he once found the light of the knowledge and glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ that led Romanes (the foremost disciple of Darwin) back to the faith, after twenty-five years of interrupted intercourse with God. Hear him describe the aching void which nothing but God could fill: "I am not ashamed to confess that with this virtual negation of God the universe to me has lost its soul of loveliness. When at times I think, as think I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed which was once mine, and the lonely mystery of existence as I now find it,—at such time I shall ever feel the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible." He had abandoned the religion of Hope for the religion of Despair. But, thank God, he found the way out of Doubting Castle and reached in safety the Delectable Mountains. The lost roll was found by the help of memory affrighted at the abyss of impenetrable gloom.

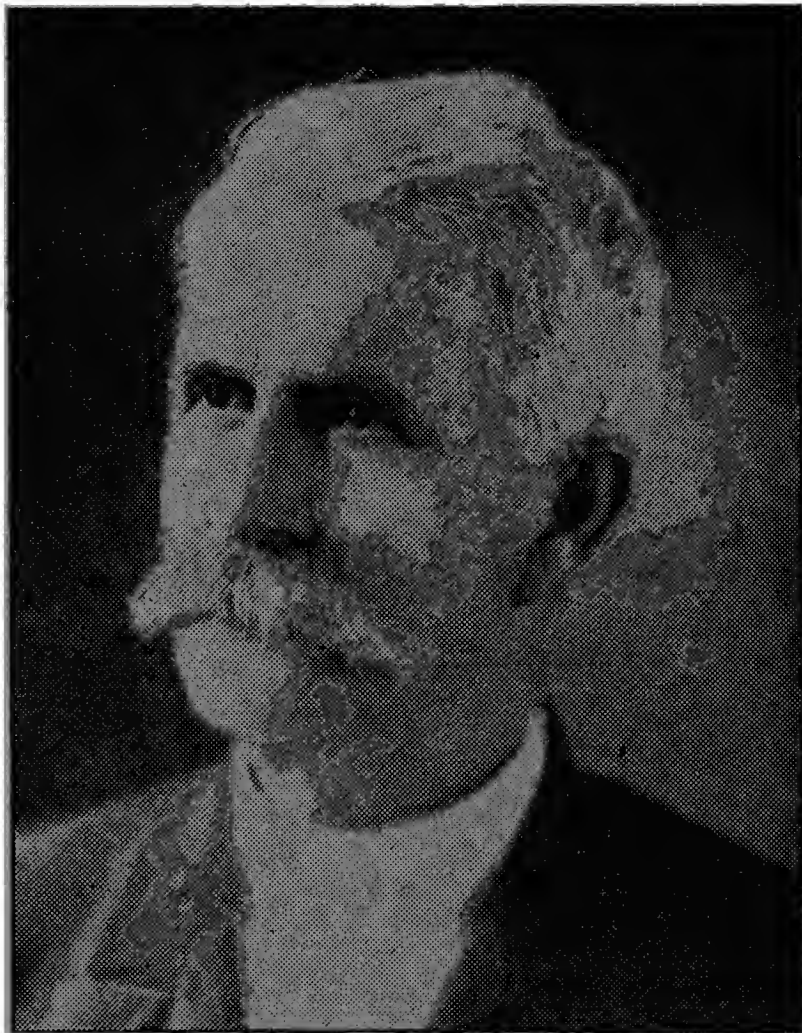
There is given by this experience and comfort of the Scriptures not only a personal hope in God but hope for

the race. This is because of the testimony which God has given concerning His Son who "shall not fail or be discouraged until he shall have set up judgment in the earth and the isles shall wait for his law." The prevailing note of Agnosticism is despair. Men have marked the universal note of pessimism in all modern godless science and the literature to which it has given birth wherever like La Place it too has no need of the hypothesis of a God. It is as if the race were being doomed to breathe in a vacuum. The world without God is ever a world without hope. If there is no God over man what hope is there for man who is not under God? What inspiration can quicken him, what laws can bind him, what love can comfort him? Only a revealed God can turn the hearts of the parents to the children and of the children to the parents and save a drifted and hopeless race. It is only man's word because so suited to man's deepest need that men experience it as God's Word. Then the Lord's day becomes man's day and the Lord's house becomes man's house and the Lord's table becomes man's table. The true "City of God" must come whence John saw it come, "out of Heaven."

This is why that only those who work with God have any real hope of assuaging the world's sorrows and healing the world's plague. It is not strange then that we find in Mr. Gladstone's diary an entry like this: "I spoke today, not without divine help." This is the Christian statesman who turns aside from the cares of state (the greatest empire the world has ever seen) to meditate upon the truth given us by Moses and the prophets as they too prayed, "If Thy presence go not with us carry

us not up hence” He who wrote upon “The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture” knew the patience and comfort of the Scriptures and had hope. Behold, there is life whithersoever the river cometh that flows from that Rock. Nations governed by such devout minds know the tree of life. “The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations” and of all nations.

Sins of Omission.



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Sins of Omission.

Text: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."—James 4-17. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."—Ps. 9-17.

The soul, through sin, has a twofold hazard—positive and negative. The latter is the greater. Sins of omission destroy more than sins of commission. Wretchedness here and hereafter is not so much from what men do as from what they fail to do.

We deal now with this more fatal and less noticed side of sin—the omission side. Let us remember that we are as really responsible for much that we fail to do as for that which we actually do.

One of the "wiles of the devil" (and he is a tactician) is to make a sort of decoy of the common vices and actual sins, and send them out to engage attention and draw the pulpit fire. And while the pulpit is thundering its broadsides against them, the main army is around on the rear—on the omission side—destroying its millions "without let or hindrance."

The man without actual sin (could such an one be found) has need of pardon. His sins of omission would sink him to destruction. Should the whole troop of vices, intemperance, falsehood, gluttony, covetousness, and all the rest, testify to his innocence, it would be

small compliment. A poor eulogy would it be to have all the cut-throats and jail-birds swear in my favor.

Moreover, the natural state must be changed. Ill growth results from foul conditions. It is the marsh and its impurities that produces fungi and "things which are vile." "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." The word of God, the Holy Spirit, and the inner consciousness all bear witness that "ye must be born again."

We should reckon our sins not alone by what we have done, but also by what we have omitted. Count them as they will be counted when the "books are opened" in the final reckoning. Every day of life perhaps, has added to the sins of omission. They have increased with the passing years until they are without number. They lurk in the shadows of the past awaiting the final judgment. Could they materialize and take form they would stand an appalling host. Who can look over his sins of omission without alarm?

Sins of Omission Are Most Subtle. Actual sins have in them an element of alarm. The sinner becomes affrighted at his own deed. The murderer hastens from the sight of his victim. The libertine flees from the scene of his debauch. Actual, outbreking sins are a clumsy pack, and can not break in without giving alarm. The crimes of youth are not committed with composure. The first false step is taken with fear and a flutter of heart; and is as a boulder of hell's fire cast into the consciousness. It is only in the advanced stages that actual sin loses its alarm. It is when the moral nature has mortified and the soul is "past feeling."

But sins of omission carry no alarm. They produce no fear. They are as thieves with velvet footfall, and do their deadly work as noiselessly as the passing of a spirit. So silent are they that we forget their presence.

Nature has a certain chivalry, and sounds an alarm before it destroys. The volcanic rumble before the eruption; the ominous stillness before the storm; the singular roaring before the cyclone; the singing of the rattles before the serpent's deadly stroke, these are nature's alarms. But sins of omission destroy without warning. There is no ominous roar, nor warning stillness, nor serpent-like singing to notify of danger. Vampire-like they lull and soothe the soul, they suck the life-blood from the immortal nature.

They Are Prolific Sins. Sin in all forms has wonderful reproductive power. The cockle-burr, briar, and thorn—vegetable sons of sin—come of their own accord. It requires constant care and conflict to prevent their coming. Thus is it with sin. And no form of sin is more prolific than sins of omission.

It was the sin of omission that doomed Dives, and the five "foolish virgins," and most of the wrecks recorded in the Book of God. We may forget duty and continue it until we forget that we are forgetting. But the products of such neglect are increasing every hour.

A little child was with an elder brother who was planting apple seeds. With his tiny hand he dropped some seeds into the ground. Years passed; the child grew to manhood; became a minister, and returning to his childhood home, found the seeds he had planted when almost an infant had grown into fruit trees. This is life. We stand in life's evening time under the shadow

of what life has produced, and will gather its fruit in eternity.

Neglect devotion and duty in youth and gather hardness and hopelessness in old age. Fail to correct or eradicate the perversity in the nature of your child; and that perversity will grow with his growth; paralyze his better nature and wreck his life. In manhood he will be a disgrace to you and despised of others. Your early neglect will fling its shadow over you in life's autumn-time, and you will sit with gray hairs 'neath the tree of your own planting.

Sins of Omission Characterize the Spirit of the World. The Apostle exhorts that we "be not conformed to this world." What is meant by "this world," is hard to define. It is not a thing of geography or commerce. It is not a something to see, or hear, or handle. It is a spirit that is averse to God, and its "chief sin is omission."

It is not so positively bad. It is not high handed and defiant of law. It is not that which sheds blood and wallows in shameless crime and pollution. Among the arch-enemies of God are three chiefs. "The world, the flesh and the devil." Observe the "world" is the first mentioned.

The "flesh" and the "devil" instigate and perpetuate the actual sins and positive crimes. Actual transgression of God's laws originates largely with them. But the "world" is the negative and genteel devil, the well-dressed and well-mannered devil; the aesthetic and much admired member of the trio.

This spirit is not coarse or fiendish or repulsive. "It is simply negative toward God. It ignores him. It

gives him the go-by. God is to it as though he were not." Its besetting sin is omission. It takes up the whole life and leaves no place for God.

How many homes of refinement and culture are there in which God is not recognized? He is not insulted by that which is blasphemous or profane. He is simply forgotten. He has no altars in those homes of elegance, nor so much as a place in the thought or affection of those who occupy them. His honor is unthought of, His service is omitted, He is wholly ignored. The awful utterance of divine truth is likewise forgotten. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." The nations that forget God! The families that forget God! The parents and the children who forget God! Oh! the thousands who are forgetting God! Going steadily, silently, but certainly to destruction by simply forgetting God.

The Spirit of the "World" Has a Distaste for the Things of God. Nothing is more out of taste in a worldly circle than to introduce the subject of our responsibility to God. Indeed it is now regarded as in bad taste for a preacher to introduce some gospel themes into his pulpit.

What right has one to bring the matter of our relation or duty to God into the mind of a cultured company when literature, or aesthetics, or the Japan-Russian war, is under consideration? What right has a preacher in this age of advanced thought and higher criticism, to stand in his pulpit and, like a blatant ignoramus, talk of a hell and a personal devil and an endless future retribution, and all that style of stuff, simply to frighten the people?

True enough the Master taught and warned of a hell, a devil, and a future punishment; but He did not have the wise and the learned of this age for his auditors. He preached to the "common people," the sea-side crowds and mountain multitudes who were not (in modern parlance), "up-to-date." The "doxies," the "isms," and the "ologies," were not then developed. They knew nothing of hypnotism, Christian science, theosophy, telepathy and the occult in general.

Even the disciples were crude and simple enough to believe that there was such a thing as the "sea of Galilee" with real fish in it. Peter likewise believed that he had a home and a wife, and a mother-in-law. They had not found out that all this was a mere fancy and a delusion; that the sea, and the fish, and the wife and mother-in-law, were mere "forms of thought;" and that there really was "no such thing as matter" in existence. Oh, the ignorance of that age!

Some of us however will still "hug the delusion" and believe in real material men, and women, and houses, and lands. We will hold to the teaching of Him who walked the waves and calmed the winds. We will continue to preach what He preached and teach what He taught until He shall return and revise that teaching. Christ must change his own "everlasting gospel" before we are ready to accept the late and lofty non-hell and no-devil doctrine which is pleasing and "very full of comfort" to many of the present day.

Sins of Omission Are the Most Hopeless. Sins like diseases, are divided into two classes: Curable and incurable. This may seem to smack of heresy, but it is truth. There are incurable sins—sins which are un-

pardonable—and they all lie on the omission side. They are of the silent, subtle, negative and unnoticed kind.

For every actual sin there is a possible pardon. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

"While the lamp holds out to burn
The vilest sinner may return."

But the sins of omission, like the fatal miasma, do their deadly work while we sleep. They seldom come into our thought. A man may be free from actual sins and even possess many virtues; and yet omitting duty and failing to honor God, he may go to eternal destruction. These omissions will damn him, "and that without remedy." God himself cannot save the man who neglects his own soul, who fails to repent and pray and exercise faith in Christ. Oh, the hazard of the soul while in the stupor of neglect!

Two soldiers had taken morphine through mistake, and had lain down to their last sleep. I saw their comrades as they used severe means to arouse them from the stupor of death. They were forced to keep in motion; beaten in the palms and on the footsoles; chafed and whipped; cold water was dashed upon them; and by this cruel kindness they were kept alive.

How many thousands, in the Church and out of it, have need to be aroused. How many in the fatal stupor of neglect. Is the genteel orthodox neglectful sleep a safe sleep? Are there not omission sin-shadows following to overwhelm in the final hour?

Sampson thought to rise up from his sleep and shake

himself and command his strength. But alas! his locks had fallen while he slept and his marvelous strength was gone.

Their Relation to a Coming Judgment. "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after." While this passage refers to the arraignment of evil-doers before the tribunal of the Church, is it not likewise true as touching the final judgment?

The murderer's sins, the libertine's sins, and the tyrant's sins precede them to Judgment and await their coming, but with most men their sins "follow after."

Many have been graciously kept from the outright crimes and have no fear of the judgment on that point; but are these also ready to meet the omissions and the neglects of life?

Days, weeks, years—a life-time perchance there may be of omitted duties and neglect; evils known but never corrected; in myself, in my children, in those for whom I was responsible; duties due my neighbor, my community, my commonwealth, all omitted; failure to lift my voice, my prayers, my influence and my vote, against wickedness and wrongdoing; declining to take ground lest I should lose favor and provoke criticism.

We may go to the final judgment without thought of what shall follow. But every sin in the awful list of omissions will produce its "thirty. sixty or an hundred fold;" and will follow on to confront us in the final hour.

Herein is one need of a judgment day. You ask, what need of a day of judgment if men are sent to their doom at the time of their death? Here is one answer. "Men's works do follow them." The harvest that comes from

a life time of neglect is not ripe when the neglecter dies. It grows and increases with time, and is not fully mature until the end comes.

We may go to judgment under the delusion that we are safe inasmuch as there are no crimes on the registry against us. But "how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" If we have put off and omitted to seek pardon, failed to take refuge under the blood of Christ, we may expect acquittal, but alas! the witnesses have not arrived. Witnesses we did not expect and are unprepared to meet are present. Our sins of omission and neglect, which have grown and increased like deathless bloodhounds, are on our trail to the judgment.

I behold in the distance what seems a gathering cloud. Ill-defined but ominous and advancing, it grows darker and more terrible as it approaches. Its fearful shadow falls over me and with hopeless horror I realize that it is the "cloud of witnesses." The multitude of my sins of omission with their fearful and stupendous results, come to confront and confound me in the judgment hour! The mountain of my own making is to sink me helpless and hopeless forever! "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Sow neglect and omission of duty and reap eternal undoing! No wonder a dying Archbishop prayed, "Lord forgive my sins; specially my sins of omission!"

One Great Need of the Times is Conviction for Sins of Omission. The Church needs this. We preach against the follies and worldly practices which paralyze the spiritual energies of our Zion. We fire gospel grape into the ball-room, the theater and the euchre club. This is but clipping the branches, while leaving

the taproot. There is something back of all this—something from which this all proceeds.

There is a prayerless home back of it—a home in which God has no altar—a home where God is neglected, if not ignored. Go to those places of pleasure and revelry and take a census of their votaries; then tell us how many of them came from godly homes. How many of them left the home altar, after the evening prayer, to attend those places?

Of the eleven hundred who perished in the recent holocaust in the Chicago theater, how many went from home-altars to that awful death? I dare assert, not one in one hundred.

People who pray regularly do not hunger for those places and pleasures. They "have meat to eat the world knows not of."

Then let us have a revolution on this matter. Let parents awake to a sense of their fatal neglect. Let the Bible be read daily and prayer made in every home. Let the childhood now coming to manhood and womanhood be reared under this influence, and we will have a radical and blessed change in the matter of worldliness and worldly amusements in the Church.

The Neglect and Abuse of the Sabbath. Its sacredness and sanctity have been ignored until, in many places, we have a Sabbath only in name. The multitudes make it a gala day. Church people use it largely for their own pleasure. Between the time spent with the Sunday morning paper (a paper three times the usual size) and the pleasure drive in the afternoon, there is little of the Sabbath left for sacred reading, meditation and prayer.

Railroads offer special inducements to all who are willing to desecrate the Sabbath on the half-rate Sunday excursion.

With neglected home altars and a desecrated Sabbath, together with an abandon to pleasure and a greed of gain never before known, our country—the home of religion and civil liberty—is in danger of drifting to where divine forbearance may cease, and to where the empires and republics of history have gone down.

The Church has the Power to Remedy this Condition. “Ye are the salt of the earth.” Politics, society, commerce and all else, need the saving salt. But this remedy must begin in the home. The home is first and basal. The state is out of the home. Society is out of the home. The Church is out of the home. Let the home be made ideal and all else becomes ideal. Let God be recognized and honored in the home. Let parents no longer forget and omit their duties and responsibilities in the home. Give us a generation from ideal and godly homes, and then will “righteousness exalt our people,” and ours will become a “nation indeed whose God is the Lord.”

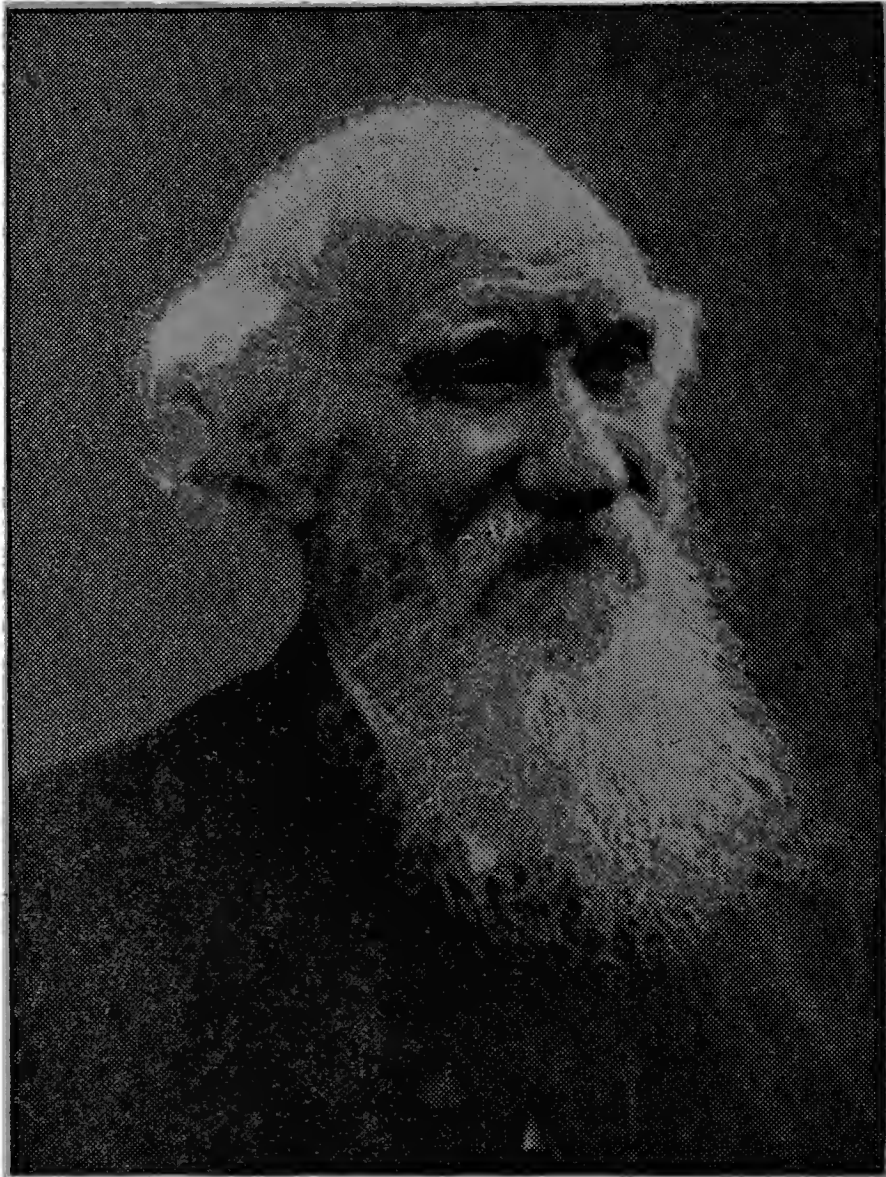
But this cannot be done while we ignore conditions and do honor to those who are but making conditions worse; while illgotten millions can be sanctified by giving a few thousands to educational or evangelistic purposes; while men can hold membership, and even office, in the Church, and at the same time, live morally in such manner as to cause the children of the world to blush; not while watchmen in Zion can see those under their care going to destruction and fail to warn and

seek to save them from the pit; even though it require discipline and tears to work their rescue.

Never was there a time when conscientious and fearless fidelity to duty was more needed by all in responsible position than today. Consecrated moral spinality in the home, in the Church, in the State, is a crying need of the hour. It is no time for "giving place to the devil." It is a time for all in authority and all under authority to draw sword against those evils and enter the campaign under the motto, "No compromise."

Let there be an awakening and a cry to God for pardon and power to prevail. Let altar fires be kindled in every home, and the heavens grow dark with the smoke of sin offerings. Let the cry of the Church go up to God in behalf of a desecrated Sabbath, and against the rum fiend as he wrecks his millions, against heartless monopolism and outrage of marriage vows. Let the warning be sounded out until Church, and State, and Republic, shall awake to their danger. Nineveh never had greater need of sack-cloth and ashes than has our fair land today. And her danger lies deep in the fact that she is asleep on moral issues.

CO-OPERATION OF THE SON
AND THE HOLY GHOST.



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Co-Operation of the Son and the Holy Ghost

Text: "But when the kindness of God our Savior, and His love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by His grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Titus 3:4-8.

One of the most successful and satisfactory ways of studying any subject taught in the Scriptures is to study it as a whole: let Scripture interpret Scripture wherever that can be done. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." One Holy Spirit moved upon the hearts of holy men, and inspired them to write whatever was written. One great thought was in the mind of the Holy Spirit, viz.: the salvation of man by Jesus Christ. No matter when the time, or what the dispensation, or period, this was ever the thought, this was ever the purpose.

The Holy Spirit may have accommodated himself to the time before and the time after the incarnation of Jesus Christ; but never changed His purpose or deviated from His plan. From the first great promise of God that the "seed of the woman should bruise the ser-

pent's head" to the grand consummation when that seed of the woman cried, "It is finished," the Holy Spirit stood by to show man how this work was to be accomplished, and how man was to receive the benefits of that work, and to assist in it.

"God the Father so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The Holy Spirit was commissioned to reveal this fact to man, show him how to believe, apply the merits of the Son's death to the heart by regenerating it, bearing witness to it of pardon, reconciliation and adoption—in a word, His office is to take the things of God and show them unto us. The Trinity is in perfect harmony in the work of man's redemption. All men are saved upon precisely the same terms—saved by grace, through faith, and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God.

Paul in his epistle to Titus sums it up in few words: "But after that the kindness and love of God, our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by His grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Christ was as much the Savior of man before as after His death on the cross. Nor was His blood one whit more efficacious after the scenes of Golgotha than before.

With God, as well as with man, He is "the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world." It is said: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the

ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause He is the mediator of the New Testament that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Christ's blood covers both the old and the new dispensation. Hence the redeemed of all ages in heaven sing "the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb"—those saved under the Mosaic dispensation and those under the Christian have one song—redemption through Christ. There is no difference. The same emblems of purification, or cleansing, are used under both dispensations. Christ with His blood, and the Holy Ghost with spirit, are the divine agencies employed for man's cleansing.

The blood stands for Jesus Christ. His blood is called the blood of the everlasting covenant. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." We are redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ as a Lamb without blemish, and without spot."

The water stands for the Spirit. Ezekiel in speaking of what God shall do for the cleansing of Israel says: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, * * * I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." The Spirit always accompanies Christ in His work of regeneration and cleansing. John in explaining the work of Christ as bringing about the new birth tells us: "This is He that

came by water and blood even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."

The High Priest on the great day of atonement always mingled water with the blood with which He was to sprinkle the mercy seat, and the people. This mixing the water with the blood was not merely to keep the blood from coagulating, but was a something that God had enjoined to show the united work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Christ offered Himself without spot to God "through the eternal Spirit." The Spirit was with Christ in His agony on the cross. And God arranged a manifestation of this to the world in the blood and water that flowed from His side when pierced by the soldier's spear. And this is why John emphasized it. His record is: "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye may believe." The manner in which John emphasizes this fact shows that it was an important factor in our salvation. "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye may believe." Couple this with Christ's declaration to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of the water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," and we get the full meaning of His words. While in this connection He speaks time and again of the necessity of being born of the Spirit this is the only time that He couples water with the Spirit. And He did it here to lead the mind of Nicodemus to lay hold upon the necessity of the Spirit in man's salvation. He being

a Master in Israel knew that water was a symbol of the Spirit. And when Nicodemus, still in doubt as to Christ's meaning, said: "How can these things be?" Christ seemed surprised, and asked, "Art thou a Master in Israel and knowest not these things?"

Water was a well known symbol of the Spirit. And many times Jesus uses it as something familiar to the people. For instance, when talking with the woman of Samaria he told her "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And again, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, if any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive. For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." If we read this in connection with what John says with reference to the water and the blood being written that they might believe it makes it perfectly plain.

Getting this thought that water was the symbol of the Holy Spirit in both the old and the new dispensations we find that he has the power to cleanse and that the application of water for ceremonial cleansing was always by affusion or sprinkling. We can understand that expression in Hebrew when in speaking of the new covenant in which the Holy Ghost performs so active a part it is said: "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled

from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

But let us come to consider the final consummation of the plan of salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ. Under the Mosaic law the sprinkling of the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant with the blood and water atoned for the sins of all who accepted this provision of mercy; as shown by their coming forward and having some of the same blood and water sprinkled on them. See what is said in the Hebrews. "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves, and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the books" (the tables of the law, here called the books, were in the Ark of the Covenant, under the mercy seat) "and all the people." As He sprinkled the people He said: "This is the blood of the Testament which God hath enjoined unto you."

This all was a type of the entrance of Jesus in the presence of God the Father and sprinkling with His own blood the true mercy seat, and then coming out and sprinkling all who accepted His sacrifice and believed in His atoning blood—the blood of the everlasting covenant. Again we are told: "We are come unto Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." And Peter says: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

See how the Spirit is associated with Christ in the work of redemption. The great atoning sacrifice hav-

ing been made, and accepted of the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit goes forth to all the world of mankind preaching peace and pardon and cleansing. It is said, "So shall He sprinkle many nations." And that Christ and the Holy Spirit are associated in this work we have but to refer to Christ's own words, when promising His disciple the Holy Ghost as a comforter, He said, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you." And again when He bade them go into all the world He said: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." And Paul tells us, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." The disciples were to preach the gospel to every creature, baptizing him in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Christ had suffered death for the sins of the world, had gone up on high, and had sprinkled the mercy seat with His own blood, having "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God." Now as the Great High Priest He comes forth with the blood of the everlasting covenant and offers to sprinkle the same precious blood upon all who will enter into covenant relations with Him. The sprinkling of the water of baptism is the act by which man accepts the blood of Jesus Christ for the "purging of his conscience from dead works to serve the living God." This act cuts him off from the world, and the flesh. He dies to the world, and is made alive unto God. As Paul expresses it, he is "buried by baptism into death." "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death."

They that are in the flesh cannot please God. "But

H

ye are no more in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

Before receiving baptism we have first to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil; and then we take a vow to follow all the commands of God, at the same time announcing our belief in God the Father, in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Ghost and in the Church of God. The old man is crucified, and the new man is raised up in us. We become new creatures in Christ Jesus. "There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

Jesus said unto His disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." So we see that to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and to deny ourself, and to take up the cross and follow Christ, is equivalent to the same thing.

Christ and the Holy Spirit work as a unit. Never one without the other. When John came baptizing with water he said that Christ would baptize with the Holy Ghost. While upon the other hand it is the Holy Ghost that applies the blood of Jesus Christ to the human heart.

When Christ was baptized the Holy Ghost descended upon Him, and there came a voice from heaven saying, "Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

John tells us that he "saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew Him not; but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the

Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

Immediately after Jesus was baptized He was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Among the earliest teachings of Christ was the absolute necessity of the new birth—the birth of the Spirit. And when Nicodemus failed to understand Him He asked the question: "Art thou a Master in Israel and knowest not these things." The operation and efficacy of the Spirit were ever recognized, and taught among the people of God; and as Nicodemus was a teacher in Israel Jesus felt that he ought to have known it, and not to have shown surprise at His plain announcement of the fact. Every ceremonial baptism with water was a type and sign of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and Jesus declared, "Except a man be born of the Spirit he cannot see the kingdom of God."

And now in the beginning of His ministry He shows the co-operation of the Spirit in man's redemption. The miracles wrought by Christ were wrought through the agency of the Spirit. When accused of casting out devils by Beelzebub, in reply, He said: "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."

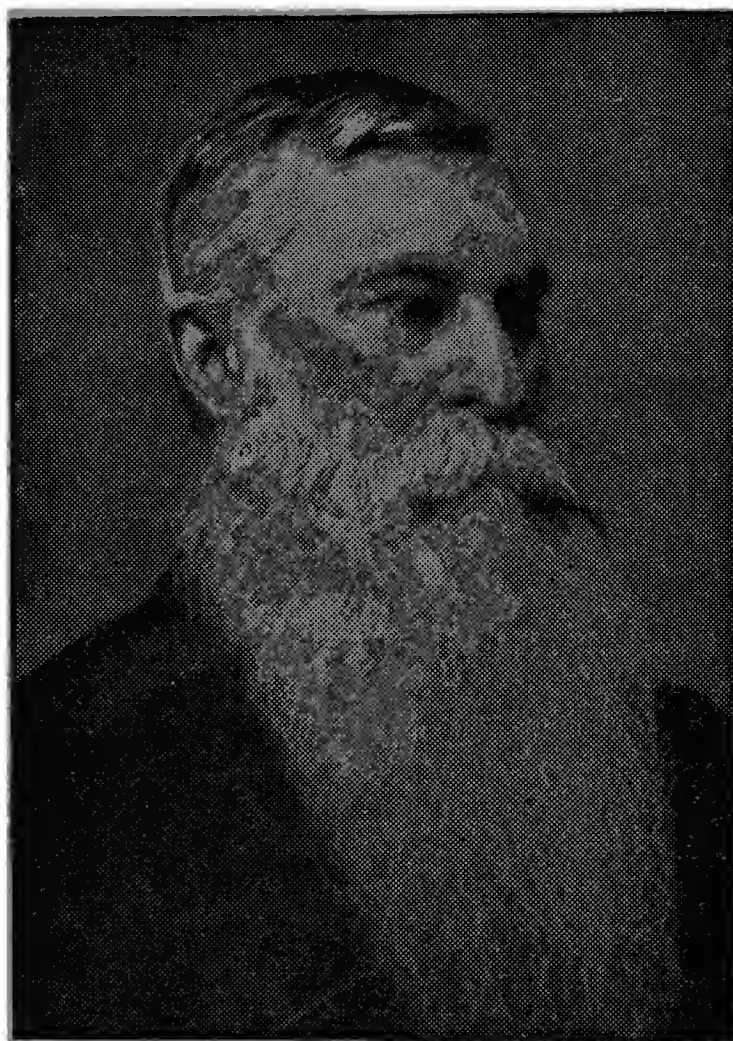
And so all through the ministry of Christ the Spirit was a co-worker with Him. And when the final act of redemption was consummated, and He offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, this offering was made through the agency of the Spirit. For it is said, "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of

Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God."

Just before His death Jesus told His disciples of the important part the Spirit was to take in the future work of the Church. He was to bring to their remembrance all things that He had told them. He was to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He was to act the part of a comforter, and to abide with the Church forever. When the body of Christ was laid in the grave it was the Holy Spirit that was commissioned to raise Him up again.

Thus we see that during the whole mission of Christ the Spirit co-operated with Him in it all. Therefore, let us never divorce them, but honor the Spirit as we honor the Son.

The Ministry of Reconciliation
OR
Missions in China.



REV. YOUNG J. ALLEN, D.D., LL.D.

The Ministry of Reconciliation;

—OR—

Missions in China.

Text: "And hath given to us the Ministry of Reconciliation, etc." II Cor., v. 18 et seq.

God in Christ Jesus reconciling the world unto himself is the idea of all the ages, the purpose of God unfolding in human history.

It is the idea of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and all its books and themes are but parts or chapters in this stupendous purpose of God, which began with "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world," culminated in the uplifting of the Son of Man, and now awaits its final issue in the consummation of all things.

This idea, this purpose, has for its "motif" the reconciliation of man to God, and for effect the readjustment of his relations—to God, to man and to nature, and his restoration to the status and prerogatives of sonship, brotherhood and dominion, in this world, and his eternal glory in the world to come.

Hence the Gospel Dispensation, the organization of the Church, and the world-wide enterprise of Foreign Missions, etc., in which we are, all and severally, called to take a part.

Herein then is our high calling of God in Christ Jesus, that we are made to be, in the language of Paul, co-workers together with Him (Christ) in this ministry of

reconciliation, ambassadors for Christ, commissioners of the Gospel of Salvation, charged with a message to all nations, to every creature, whom we are to beseech, as though it were God Himself speaking through us, inviting them to be reconciled.

The first great feature of this ministry that arrests our attention is its unity and persistence or perpetuity. It is the one supreme idea of the Divine Revelation and purpose, the central idea of the Kingdom of God among men, and all the institutions of the Church are supposed to be adjuncts to this ministry, and justify their existence only so far as they contribute to the realization of its ultimate purpose.

The second feature is that of unity and universality combined. (1) We have God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. God so loved the world, etc., terms expressive of geographical unity, entireness, the world as a unit, to which Christ came as the Son of God, a mediator and a Saviour. (2) We have the Great Commission, or Christ's charge, to His disciples to go teach all nations. Here we have the world in its political or national divisions, represented in terms of a comprehensive unity in universality, or universality of parts centered in one great physical unity comprising all nations.

But that is not all. This unity and universality still persist, and we have the idea of completeness, entireness, allness, expressed in terms of the units themselves, the simple original elements of the round whole, to-wit: every creature, that is, every man or member of the human family; while the range of universality comprises not only the units of the human family but every possible

relation of which they are capable. Whether spiritual, expressed in terms of religion, or human, expressed in terms of morality, or natural, expressed in terms of dominion.

Unity, universality, persistence or perpetuity—these features or attributes are, strictly speaking, the unique characteristics of the Gospel in its antecedents and its ministry of reconciliation, and inhere not in any human system or cult. Into all the so-called religions or philosophies of the great and populous pagan East, we look in vain for such testimonials. Shintoism, the cult of Japan, Confucianism, the national system of China, together with their ancient peers and congeners, Taoism and Brahmanism, are alike limited by their very constitutions, and make no pretensions to cosmic unity or geographical universality of purpose; and much less have they essayed to know or compass man and his relationships. Persistence in a sense they have, but it consists in existence simply, and exhibits no life, no progress, nor even sympathy with modern thought and the onward march of civilization.

And the same may be said also of Buddhism and Mohammedanism, for although they have achieved a somewhat wider range and made some pretense at missionary propagation of their respective systems, and claim adherents in many countries, they are equally wanting in the elements of universality, perpetuity, morality and sympathy with progress. Hence in all the East we have as the fruitage and reward of ages and milleniums of such religion and philosophy, the phenomena of many peoples congealed, as it were, in an

arrested civilization, and paralyzed and helpless as China is today.

I repeat it, therefore, these great and distinguishing characteristics, to-wit: unity, universality, persistence or perpetuity, comprehending all time and place in their relation to man, and man in his relation to all else, are attributes peculiar to the Gospel and mark its dispensation as the one divinely ordained ministry whereby the world is to be reconciled to God.

The next feature that commands our attention is the attitude of this ministry toward man himself. And here we find a characteristic that is still more striking and significant of the Gospel. God is no respecter of persons, and in this dispensation He has made provision for all, even the poor have the Gospel preached unto them, which is a specimen and proof of the universality of which we have already spoken. But that is not all, nor what is here referred to, however important and satisfactory as a fact. There is something deeper, more astonishing and world-concerning, which underlies that and constitutes the why or philosophy of that unique fact, and that is the revelation therein made of the dignity and worth of the individual man.

In the sight of Heaven man is a child of God. It is true he has forfeited his birthright and his status and fallen very low in the scale of being. His relations are all broken up, for having sinned against God, he has no religion, brotherhood is impossible, and nature with all its amplitude of resources originally designed to supply his needs and over which it was intended he should have dominion, has, paradoxical as it may seem, usurped dominion over him. Hence everywhere, as in this hoary

East, man is exhibited in the plight of a sinner, miserable and poor and helpless—a ruined son of God. But the Father looks clean through the ruin, and sees at bottom of it all, His own image, more truly and surely than Michael Angelo saw the angel in the fragment of marble.

This is another characteristic peculiar to the Gospel. You may search the history, philosophy and religious systems of the world, ancient and modern, and nowhere will be found such an insight and perception of the nature and potentialities of man, nor sympathy for the unfortunate and deserving, even half way approximating the charity and help extended by this ministry even to the degraded and undeserving.

And so this ministry is sent forth to proclaim not only a message of reconciliation, but along with it all that such a message can signify of restoration of lost status and prerogatives to a redeemed son of God.

Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, whom He hath reconciled to Himself by Jesus Christ, that we should be called the Sons of God! And let us consider again the character of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus. That unto us, as unto Paul, who in terms of sublime self-abnegation, characterized himself as less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that we should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

We serve God. From the court of the Almighty we received our commission. It was delivered at the hands of one, who, looking up, said, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, go ye therefore and teach

or disciple all nations, and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ—and upon this embassy, its success or its failure, hangs the fate, for weal or woe of all men to whom our message shall come!

One could hardly conceive it possible, and yet we are assured that in the Churches there are thousands of members and not a few of their responsible leaders, who while they accept the Gospel for themselves, neither recognize nor accept the obligations of redeeming grace, or of membership in the household of God, the Church.

Not only so, but we even hear of Churches who so misunderstand, or are so ignorant of the import of Revelation, of the Gospel dispensation, and the original purpose of the Church as a divine institution, and particularly are so wanting in knowledge of the great unevangelized world of heathenism, or so indifferent, as to repudiate any obligations beyond themselves and refuse to contribute to the support of Missions in foreign lands. The excuse they are said to offer in justification of conduct so cold and anomalous is that the heathen are supposed to have a religion, or cult, or philosophy of their own, in which they live and are fully content, and therefore they should not be disturbed, etc. But surely in the light of this twentieth century, with floods of knowledge pouring into Christendom from the remotest ends and darkest corners of the world, there can be but few who will avow, or attempt to extenuate their indifference by an excuse so untrue to facts and so unworthy a disciple of the Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

One has but to contrast the present history and condi-

tion of countries in the East and West, in Pagan and Christian lands, to be convinced that it is true not of the individual only, but likewise of the nation, to-wit: that without me (Christ) ye can do nothing; while as Paul says: I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me. So true it is, the presence or absence of Christ makes all the difference, whether in the individual or the nation.

The hope of the world then is in the increasingly large class of men and women who not only accept Christ as their personal Saviour, but recognize their obligations to this Ministry of Reconciliation, to which they themselves are consciously indebted for all of life that is worth living, and for the ultimate hope of heaven.

These are the elect of God, and constitute a cloud of witnesses hovering with benedictions and blessings over every land; thus fitly fulfilling or realizing the Mission of the Angel whom John saw fly in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

Referring now more definitely to the subject of Missions, which I conceive to be the central idea and purpose of this delegated or ambassadorial Ministry of reconciliation, and with special reference to China and other civilized pagan or non-Christian countries of the East, it might be well to note what has seemed for years to indicate some confusion of ideas or perhaps some misconception of the subject, and thus help to account for what cannot but be patent to everyone, who has laid the matter to heart, to-wit: the meagre and inadequate pro-

vision of men, means and measures supplied for the work in the field of Foreign Missions.

This misconception is an egregious one and would seem to originate from confounding two very dissimilar things or enterprises, as Church Extension proper, but commonly designated as Domestic or Home Missions, with the idea and work of Foreign Missions. Home Missions, or Missions in lands where the Church is already established are of the nature of Church extension among ones own people, and are based largely on their destitution or inability in a personal or social way to provide themselves with the blessings and privileges of the Gospel ministry. This function is thus supplied to them in terms of the injunction "Preach the Gospel to every Creature," thus fulfilling to the utmost, by means of the Church already established in such lands, the ultimate purpose of the Ministry of reconciliation.

Foreign Missions, on the other hand, contemplate the establishment of the Church and its functions among tribes and peoples and nations whose destitution and need appeal to us not in signs of poverty or material aspects of want, for the element of charity in its eleemosynary signification, hardly enters into it, but in terms far more pathetic, urgent and moving, when rightly appreciated, to-wit: as having no hope and without God in the world. Theirs is a moral and not necessarily even associated with a material destitution, and hence the great saving enterprise of Foreign Missions is addressed to the nations, all nations in terms of the Great Commission. Christ's advent pertained to the world as a round whole, a complete unity. He commissioned His disciples, the Apostles, to all nations, and thus inaugurated the

idea and work of Foreign Missions. And when in these several and respective nations the Gospel has taken effect, the Churches, known as native Churches or organizations, will inaugurate the idea of domestic missions, or Church extension, within their respective limits, and then, and not till then, will be fulfilled the time when the Gospel shall be preached to every creature. This latter function belongs to the native Church in whatever land, and therefore, in so far as the field and functions differ, there must be confusion in regarding and treating these two great enterprises, Domestic and Foreign Missions, as if they were one and the same.

“The Mission of the Church is not fulfilled when it gives the Gospel to the poor and feeds the hungry with the bread of Life.” If that be true of the situation in America and the West how much more forcibly true of the situation in China and the East? And yet it has taken nearly a half century of missions on that limited basis with results equally limited following, to convince the Churches and Missionary Boards of Christendom that China is not a nation of illiterate coolies and paupers. The Ministry was ordained to leadership, and sent forth as a teacher of all nations, and here in China what our cause needs most is the culture and aspirations (not ambition) of leadership. The favorite advice of the late Bishop Simpson to young men was “Study leadership, and capture it for Christ. Secure the leaders and you gain the followers!”

Just here, but for the space-limit set to this discourse, some illustrative details of the conduct and history of Missions might be introduced, as a revelation drawn from my own experience of nearly half a century of pio-

neer work as a "path finder" in the Foreign Mission field, and showing how at last the idea and methods of Foreign Missions are beginning to evolve and bear large fruit, while the native Church is also beginning to recognize its relation to the cause, and is planning not only for self-support and self-government, but also for self-propagation. Thus exhibiting the encouraging assurance that the message which Foreign Missions have lodged with the nation, in its language, in its literature, in its school and in its Church, etc., shall be passed on and interpreted to the individuals of which the nation is composed—the "every creature" of the divine command.

That the Gospel is the supreme need of China, that only the Gospel can regenerate its people and save them, are questions hardly open to doubt. Yet how many in Christian lands really understand the situation? Is it not a common mistake even now to imagine that all that is necessary among a heathen people is simply to announce the Saviour, and narrate the story of His wonderful life, death, resurrection and ascension, and offer to them the gift of Salvation which is proclaimed in the Gospel, or glad tidings, and is for them and for all people, whosoever will accept it? Not unto one in ten thousand is such a message intelligible, nor by one in ten times that many is the message accepted or acceptable on the mere hearing of the ear.

It must be interpreted in terms of a "conscious need." And this is true not in one class only, as of the poor whose poverty and "bitterness" of misery drive them to accept an alms even of a Foreigner and Stranger, or a treatment at a Mission hospital, but it is true universally, from the Emperor on his throne to the poorest coolie

in his hovel—true everywhere, and not only in matters of religion, but equally so in matters of trade and commerce.

In nature all progress, as of growth and motion, is along lines of least resistance, and hence the crooked stream, the leaning tree, and the zigzag lightning; in business, trade is regulated by commercial wants, or demand and supply, while in matters personal and religious the term “conscious need” would seem to best express the wants of the human spirit. The same thing is recognized in diplomacy and politics, and hence, the incomparable science of compromise. From these facts come the very natural deduction that the real principle, or law governing the presentation of the Gospel and the progress of Missions is simply that of conscious need, which in terms of nature’s law is manifestly only another expression for “the line of least resistance.”

There is therefore a science of Missions, and were it studied with half the diligence and intelligence which characterize the student of Commerce, we might long since have removed from us the reproach that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.

The foreign merchant and the missionary are practically in the same boat, in pagan lands. The merchant is seeking for treasure, the missionary is a fisher of men. The one studies the science of Commerce for a knowledge of the common wants of man and how to supply them; the other studies Halieutics or the science of (Gospel) fishing, i. e. Missions, and looks to “conscious need” to direct his piscatorial wisdom and skill.

Where the merchant finds existing wants he supplies

them and strives to enlarge them or create others, and his trade grows till a whole nation is supplied with wonderful productions, the like of which was entirely unknown to the people only a few years before. This is the history of the trade in glassware, particularly in the form of windowpanes, bottles and mirrors, etc.; of watches and clocks, soap and candles and lamps, etc., among the common people; of the introduction of steam machinery, steamships, railways, telegraphs, telephones, an Imperial Post Office, weapons of precision, men-of-war, an improved educational system, newspapers, power presses, and many other strange and revolutionary inventions, all of which are based on wants which already existed, but were so inadequately met by native means, as to permit their easy displacement by something so infinitely superior to anything they have ever seen before. Compulsion in trade is impossible, and he wins who comes nearest to supplying what the wants of the country demand.

It is not otherwise in the prosecution of Foreign Missions. And how different might have been the results of today had all our missionaries given more attention to the science of Missions before coming here, or been allowed greater liberty of suggestion and initiative on the field after experience. For all such there ought to be a school or department of Halieutics in connection with some of the Home Colleges or Seminaries, and then the fatal error of so many might be corrected, namely, that all fish are caught with the same bait or by the same device. A pin hook and a fly attached to a cotton thread may suffice to catch a minnow or a horny head, but larger tackle and a different article are called for when

one would bob for eels, trawl for cod or salmon or launch out into the deep in search of seals and whales.

Now is the day of humiliation for China, but it happens to spell opportunity to the Church and to the cause of Missions. It is a transition period which if wisely interpreted and availed of now, like Shakespeare's tide in the affairs of men will lead on to fortune, but neglected leads who knows where?

"On such a full sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures."

Present auguries foretell great changes for China and in China, and what will help bring the country on faster or surer or safer than a wider diffusion of light and knowledge divine and human? We need not only an increase of preachers, but of teachers and schools and colleges of higher grade and better equipment. We need also to multiply the issue of periodicals and the making of books; in a word the greatest and most urgent need of the Missionary field today is a Literary Department of Missions, and one or many Publishing Houses to serve it and diffuse its healing leaves wide as the nation. The Chinese are a reading people, a literary nation and there is no force among them comparable to the press. Foreign Missions should address themselves primarily to the Nation, and now there exists an opportunity to touch China sympathetically at every point by a universal literature addressed to the nation in its schools, colleges, and universities, its officials, gentry and literati, in the form of text books, periodicals and a general literature for all.

Here is the opportunity of all the Gospel Ages, in the midst of this, the greatest Mission field of the world.

Oh, ye brethren and friends in the Home land, we are not straitened in this heathen land by reason of any local disability or opposition, but only for lack of Home support and sympathy. We pray you therefore as though God did beseech you by us, be ye first of all reconciled to God and then take part with us by your gracious sympathy and help in this incomparable Ministry of Reconciliation, whereby we make known the unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles. Amen.

Deposit and Security.



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Deposit and Security

Text: "For I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." 2 Tim. 1:12.

I know whom I have believed; often misquoted, I know in whom I have believed. To prevent this mistake, the Revised Version reads, I know him whom I have believed. I know (present time) Christ Jesus whom I have believed these many years since He appeared to me near Damascus. Knowing and believing were two facts, not one fact with two names; closely akin, yet not the same. Belief rests on testimony or other proof; knowledge on consciousness, on personal experience. "One thing I know," testified the man whose eyes Jesus had opened, "that whereas I was blind, now I see;" no reasoning of the Pharisees could shake that knowledge. Each man must know for himself, and not for another; others may believe on his testimony.

Paul could tell when, where and how he first believed. Each Christian has a particular story of his own conversion. Amid a wide variety in incidents and degrees of emotion, all these cases possess an essential sameness. You perhaps never had any disbelief, or even shadow of doubt, that Jesus was the Son of God and the Saviour of the world; your inherited faith may have quickened into

spiritual trust in childhood, as a seed in the prepared soil quickens in the warmth of spring: Saul of Tarsus was filled in mind and heart with proud confidence in his pure Hebrew blood, thorough knowledge of the law, and blameless observance of its rites and ethics, and with stubborn and violent prejudice against the Nazarene and His followers; these must be rooted out. Jesus was to you from infancy a name of honor and sweetness, and the Church drew forth your admiration and sympathy; Saul reviled and hated that name, and vengeance against all Christians flamed forth from the hot furnace of his heart. For a season you neglected the great salvation; Saul fought it with all his soul and strength, was present and consenting at the martyrdom of Stephen, and wasted the Church, entering houses, and dragging off men and women to prison. Conversion in his case was like blasting a tunnel through the hard rock of a great mountain. Or let us liken the coming of faith into your heart to the gentle distilling of the dew, and its coming into Saul's to a sudden storm of lightning and thunder and mighty downpour of rain. Yet Saul's new faith was the identical faith in object and quality which sprang up in your heart and mine in the early morning of life. It was head-faith, intellectual conviction; heart-faith, humble, contrite, grateful clinging to Jesus as his Lord and Redeemer, his sure and only refuge. It was faith of the will, practical and decisive; he surrendered to Christ, glad now to be His disciple, servant, soldier; as he said, "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

Paul was now a believer. With faith there came a mighty transformation. He described this change as

salvation, a new birth, a new creation, a dying unto sin and rising with Christ. These figures agree in denoting a new man, a fresh life that contrasted with the former life that had ceased. We may briefly sum up his experience as the revelation of the Son of God. I do not mean the sudden light that shone around him and his companions above the splendor of the midday sun, the visible appearance of Jesus, the voice which spoke in his ear, the message of Ananias and his exposition of the gospel; no one of these facts, nor all combined, constituted this revelation. His letter to the Galatians refers to it thus, "When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me:" the revelation was spiritual, inward, not through the senses. Scales of prejudice and self-righteousness fell from the eyes of his understanding. God shone into his heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Saul had believed in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; yet never before had he understood the Father as now that the Son revealed Him. His knowledge of the Son dates from that hour. It was a knowledge so blissful and satisfying that whatever he had valued and sought was henceforth counted loss. Charmed with the vision of Christ's transcendent majesty and grace, of His infinite beauty and loveliness, he pressed onward that he might "know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made comfortable unto His death." It was not an evanescent sight, but abiding; beholding as in a glass, or reflecting as a mirror, the glory of the Lord, he, yea "we all are changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord." There entered his heart the peace which Jesus

had called "my peace," the peace of God which passeth all understanding; Christ's spirit of purity and love possessed him; Christ's enthusiasm of humanity, passion for souls, set Paul's soul afire.

This inward revelation of Christ is the common privilege of believers. It was promised by Jesus. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas (not Iscariot) saith unto him, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered, and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Paul prayed for the Ephesians, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God." This is not hearsay, nor inference, but personal experience.

Him to know is life and peace,
And pleasure without end;
This is all my happiness,
On Jesus to depend;
Daily in His grace to grow,
And ever in His faith abide;

Only Jesus will I know,
And Jesus crucified.

Does knowledge supersede faith? No; knowledge, experience, is the abiding fruit of an abiding faith, and reacts on faith to confirm and strengthen it. Nor should this consciousness of Christ in us, our life, made unto us of God wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, this knowledge at first hand which makes each believer a witness, cause us to undervalue the Scriptures, as though we were henceforth independent of their teaching. Christian experience is not an air-plant without roots in the ground; but a tree rooted in the word of God, planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in season, and whose leaf shall not wither.

Paul had known Christ a long time, and had tested the faithfulness of His promises and the sufficiency of His grace in many crises, when he wrote the words of the text. A prisoner at Rome, awaiting execution, he had the full assurance of faith. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." He used two Greek words which both the Authorized and the Revised Versions have translated into the long phrase "that which I have committed unto him." The margin of the Revision gives the two equivalent English words, "my deposit;" as if he had deposited funds in a bank. We have studied the distinction between faith and knowledge; now let us study the distinction between consecration and committal. They are not two acts, but two phases

or sides of a single act, distinguishable in thought, though inseparable in fact.

This great transaction is usually named consecration. We consecrate to Christ our bodies and souls; the whole man. This includes our lives and our all. Property, time, what we have and what we hope, our reputation, our service, are laid on the altar, a living and glad sacrifice. We are not our own, but Christ's, that we may do and suffer His will. In a higher and fuller sense than to our family or to our country, we give ourselves to our Lord Jesus who gave himself for us, and in whom we have redemption. Nothing is reserved: Christ's title to us is perfect. It is a gift in the sense that we devote ourselves willingly, cheerfully; but it is not the less a recognition of His just claim. With solemn vows we bind ourselves henceforth to do not our own will, but His will; to seek not our own glory, but His glory. Thus self is renounced; we are stripped of every thing; we are simply servants of our Master, soldiers of our Captain, subjects of our King. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

Let us examine this personal act from another point of view. Is it not an act of trust whereby we commit ourselves and our all to Christ for safe keeping? Is it not casting all our care on Him, with assurance that He cares for us? Jesus becomes our guarantee, guardian and guide. We were as sheep that had gone astray, lost and helpless, in a land of drought and death, exposed to ravages of wild beasts. We heard the voice of Jesus, the good shepherd, calling us to Him. Joyfully

we committed ourselves to His wise, watchful, mighty care. He has led us into green pastures, and by still waters, and at evening within a protected fold. If our path has sometimes lain amid sharp rocks, frowning precipices, thick gloom; if we have been startled by the fierce cries of hungry wolves; if we have walked through the valley of the shadow of death, we had no need to fear, for His presence, staff and rod were our sure defense. We committed ourselves to Him, as an ignorant and untrained pupil commits himself to a wise and gracious teacher for instruction and culture; as a wasted and suffering patient commits himself to a skillful physician for healing; as a man overboard, with spent strength, sinking, commits himself to the life-boat and rescuer.

Wide as consecration is committal, they cover the same points. Peter wrote, "Let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator." The soul is the great treasure, the pearl beyond all price save the blood of Christ which was shed for its redemption. But the body is included in the covenant sealed by His blood; and no interest is overlooked by Him who numbers the hairs of our head, and does not fail to notice and reward so slight a service in His name as the giving a cup of cold water to a disciple.

The deposit is safe: For I know that He is able to keep it. Keep answers to more than one Greek word in our Authorized Version. The exact meaning of the word here used is guard. He is able to keep by guarding, as a watchman guards a house, as a garrison guards

a fortress, as a war-ship guards a harbor. Christ is our security.

Two questions may be asked: Is He willing? Is He able? We think of our guilt, the number, variety, and aggravation of our offenses, the light, mercy, and privileges against which we have sinned, and the vows we have broken: then we ask, will God pardon and accept such a vile offender? Paul did worse things than you and I; but he did them ignorantly, in unbelief, supposing that he was uprooting a profane and fatal heresy; we sinned with open eyes, against the protest of conscience. Yet Paul felt that he was the chief of sinners, and that his salvation was a monumental case of the long suffering and mercy of God.

But when attention fastens on our corruption of nature, the strength of lust, passion and wilfulness, our bondage to evil habits, the fickleness of virtuous and godly desires, and the multiplicity and violence of temptations, the question arises in each heart, is it possible for me to become and continue a true and consistent follower of the holy Jesus? Good impulses come and go like fitful breezes. Today I may feel inclined to quit my old courses, and begin a new life; but tomorrow, under changed conditions, or in another mood, my good feelings and resolves will dissolve like the dew of the dawn when the sun grows hot.

Even believers often find it easier to trust pardoning mercy than preserving power. But the covenant in Christ provides equally remission of sins and purification of the heart, grace that we may turn to God in repentance and faith, and grace to overcome and persevere. Paul gloried in nothing save the cross, and in his preach-

ing knew nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. This does not mean that he did not glory in Christ risen, ascended, enthroned, interceding, and also a living presence in the Church and in the heart of each disciple. The Lamb that was slain is our High-priest. The good Shepherd stays with His flock, guiding, feeding, guarding them. Specially is He with us in the Holy Spirit, that other Comforter, Patron, Helper, whom He promised to send. The short prayer He taught us contains a petition for daily bread, and one for forgiveness; but also this double petition, Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. When Satan plotted and watched to seize and crush Peter, the bold and ardent leader whose impetuosity exposed him to danger, Jesus prayed for him that his faith might not fail. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever; ever faithful, wise and strong, meek and lowly, full of compassion. His love is two-fold; the love of our Lord and Redeemer, and the love of our brother who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted. The weakest and guiltiest of men may boldly approach Him seated on His throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus is the surety of the better covenant with all its rich promises, yet not in any sense which would set aside our personal responsibility. He will not carry you in His arms, as a nurse carries a babe; but He will strengthen you with might in the inner man, so that you may walk in all His ways, yea, run with joyous speed the heavenly race, and win the prize. He will not fight

your battles, but He will clothe you in complete armor, and inspire you with courage, endurance, and confidence, that you may be more than conqueror. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." "But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." He will not do your work, while you are idle and self-indulgent, but He will work in you to will and to do, that you may work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; not slavish fear, not a coward's tremor, not doubt of sufficient grace and sure reward, but the fear of a sensitive conscience, of a profound conviction of the momentous issues involved, of an intense longing to be true to your loving Lord. He will not bear your sufferings, except in tender sympathy; but He will permit you to drink His cup and share His baptism of sorrow and conflict, that you may share His joy and glory.

Against that day. The day of His execution was near. It caused no dread. He was ready to depart from his old and battered tabernacle of clay, from his beloved children and comrades in the faith, from the world. He was eager to be with Christ which was far better. He had not forgotten the radiance on Stephen's face when he looked up to heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on his right hand; nor the last words of the martyr, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." I think that face must have haunted him, and that voice rung in his ears, again and again. But now he would like to stand by the side of Stephen, and with him gaze upon the Lord of glory. and that they should kneel together in adoring love before Him who had borne their sins in His own body on the cross. He would find there too a hearty

greeting from brethren with whom he had taken sweet counsel, and sons and daughters whom he had begotten in the Lord, that had preceded him into glory.

Paul's eye did not rest, however, on the approaching day of his death. He was looking beyond to a far off day of greater joy, the closing day of the world's history, the second coming of the Lord Jesus, the resurrection of the dead, the consummation of the kingdom. The latest arrivals from earth would have brought the news, The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. Paul would be one of the great company to attend the Lord Jesus on the triumphal day. I know not how he will recognize the old body of his humiliation in the glorious body with which he shall be clothed, when that which was sown in weakness, dishonor, and corruption, a natural body, shall be raised a spiritual body, in power, glory, and incorruption. In the vast multitude that shall stand on the right hand of the Judge he will not be lost. The eye of the Master will be fixed on him, the voice of Jesus will call his faithful servant by name to stand before the throne, the hand of the King will crown him, and all the angelic hosts and all the saints made perfect will shout Amen to the eulogy, Well done! "Forever with the Lord" completes the story.

JOHN WESLEY'S IDEA OF A CHRISTIAN.

In the Manchester (England) Mission the British Wesleyan Methodists have each Sunday afternoon a sermon from some distinguished minister on the general topic, "What Is Christianity?" A few Sundays ago the sermon was preached by Rev. John S. Simon, Governor of Didsbury College. Mr. Simon chose for his theme "John Wesley's Idea of a Christian," and in the discussion said so many luminous things so exactly suited to our situation that we are glad to reproduce from The Methodist Times the full text of the sermon:

John Wesley's Idea of a Christian.

By Rev. John S. Simon, Governor of Didsbury College.

In the present series of these lectures we are making an attempt to answer the question, "What is Christianity?" I admit at once that it is impossible to give an exhaustive description of Christianity. Today I will not add my own individual voice to those which are uttering their answers to the question, "What is Christianity?" I will be a voice for another man—a man who profoundly studied the problem we are considering and who, above most, is entitled to be heard. That man is John Wesley, the great apostle of spiritual and practical Christianity in the eighteenth century. Surely from him we shall obtain a reply to our question. If that reply is not complete, it will at least be illuminating. John Wesley has described Christianity by describing a Christian, and to that description I now ask your attention. In 1742 Wesley published a small pamphlet of twenty pages, which he entitled "The Character of a Methodist." In a letter to the editor of Lloyd's Evening Post, written in 1767, he explained the origin of this pamphlet. When he was a young man, with a mind keenly interested in religion, he had been much impressed with the description of the character of a Christian sketched by the hand of Clement of Alexandria. For ten years that description influenced his mind. Then he thought that it would serve a useful purpose if he drew up such a "character" himself, "only

in a more Scriptural manner, and mostly in the very words of Scripture." He carried out his design, and sent his work into the world with the title "The Character of a Methodist." He selected the title because he thought that it would excite curiosity. He also saw that it might give him an opportunity to remove prejudice against the Methodists from the minds of candid men.

Whatever we may think of the title of John Wesley's pamphlet there can be no doubt that it was his intention to describe the character of an ideal Christian. Towards the close of his description he makes that fact clear. He says, "These are the principles and practices of our sect; these are the marks of a true Methodist. By these alone do those, who are in derision so called, desire to be distinguished from other men. If any man say, 'Why these are only the common fundamental principles of Christianity,' I reply thou hast said, so I mean; this is the very truth; I know they are no other, and I would to God both thou and all men know, that I, and all who follow my judgment, do vehemently refuse to be distinguished from other men by any but the common principles of Christianity, the plain old Christianity that I teach, renouncing and detesting all other marks of distinction. And whosoever is what I preach, let him be called what he will, for names change not the nature of things; he is a Christian not in name only but in heart and in life. He is inwardly and outwardly conformed to the will of God as revealed in His written Word. He thinks, speaks and lives according to the method laid down in the revelation of Jesus Christ. His soul is renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. And having the mind that was in Christ, he

so walks as Christ also walked." (Works Vol. viii., p. 346, 8 vo). After this declaration I think that in dealing with Wesley's pamphlet we may conclude that he uses the word Methodist and Christian interchangeably. For the purpose of this lecture I shall speak as if he had entitled his work.

"The Character of a Christian."

Those who are familiar with Wesley's method of treating great subjects will be aware that he often adopted the convenient plan of dealing with them, first negatively, then positively. He pursues this course in his pamphlet. He starts out with the intention to discover and describe "the distinguishing marks of a Christian." and he shows what these marks are not, then what they are.

(1) He first of all asserts that the distinguishing mark of a Christian is not his opinions of any sort.

It is necessary that we should note that Wesley uses the word "opinion" in a definite sense. He distinguishes between "opinions" and "beliefs." He does not undervalue the possession of right "opinions" on matters of religion. Speaking to his own people, he says:—"Lay so much stress on opinions that all your own, if it be possible, may agree with truth and reason; but have a care to anger, dislike or contempt towards those whose opinions differ from yours. * * * Condemn no man for not thinking as you think. Let everyone enjoy the full and free liberty of thinking for himself; let every man use his own judgment, since every man must give an account of himself to God." It is clear that Wesley, by "opinions," means those private conclusions which we

reach on matters concerning religion which do not touch the essential truths of Christianity. In another place he expressly says, "As to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity, we think and let think." In his pamphlet we conclude that John Wesley uses the word "opinions" in the sense in which he employs it in his well-known assertion, "orthodoxy or right opinions, is at least but a very slender part of religion, if it can be allowed to be any part of it at all." I need hardly say that this assertion provoked great hostility when he made it in the Churches in which he was permitted, for a time, to preach at the opening of his evangelistic campaign. But I do not know that anyone will be inclined to attack it today.

Let us look at this matter for a moment. Wesley, in effect, says that a man may be orthodox and yet he may not be a Christian. Let us remember the circumstances in which Wesley spoke. He confronted congregations that repeated without any dissent from their truth the creeds of the Christian Church. Their opinions about doctrine were correct, at any rate it never entered in the minds of most of them to doubt the statements which they repeated from week to week. They were orthodox. But Wesley saw that their consent to the creeds was merely an intellectual consent, and that it failed to affect their character and their conduct. Seeing this, he asserted that "orthodoxy or right opinions" about the truths of Christianity "is a very slender part of religion, if it can be allowed to be any part of it at all." We must not suppose that Wesley undervalued the creeds. I do not think that any man who has seen the shadows which lie upon the abyss of religious truth can join in the con-

temptous cry against the creeds and against theology. The mysteries of religion elude the mind. But it is possible for us to partially comprehend some of them if we will listen to the words in which spiritual men have tried to **express** them. Creeds are aids to thinking on the **facts and doctrines** of Christianity; and their value, when rightly used, is incalculable. When a man, however, imagines that the whole of Christian truth can be expressed in a creed, and that so long as he orally pronounces its words he is a Christian, he is making a fatal mistake. Creeds are of little worth unless their contents change and govern our life. If they do not affect us then our repetition of them is "vain." The more closely we study Wesley's assertion, the more completely shall we be convinced of its truth.

We have seen that Wesley's view concerning "opinions" was broad and generous. We must not suppose, however, that he looked upon the foundation truths of the Christian religion as matters upon which men might hold varying and antagonistic "opinions." Orthodoxy might be "but a slender part of religion," faith in its verities was absolutely essential. Faith is the driving power of a man's life. When we are watching him and trying to understand him we have to find out what he believes. As he believes in his secret heart so is he. Now what did Wesley note as the distinguishing beliefs of the Christians? If we turn to his pamphlet, or, better still, to his life, we find three great truths which told decisively on his character and his work.

He Believed in the Bible

—that all Scripture was given by the inspiration of God.

He accepted the Bible as containing the only sufficient rule both of Christian faith and practice. He recognized and adored Jesus Christ as "the eternal, supreme God." Concerning these truths he had no hesitation. He accepted them without reserve, and no one can understand his life and his work who imagines that he held any one of them with a hand trembling with uncertainty, palsied with doubt.

In these lectures we know that we are addressing many who do not accept our view of truth; but we should lose your respect altogether if we did not possess convictions on matters of religion, or if we allowed these convictions to be in a state of suspended animation in your presence. I would commend to the young men in this audience the words of John Morley, "He who begins life by stifling his convictions is in a fair way for ending it without any convictions to stifle." These are words that should sink into your hearts, that should sound a warning against any trifling with the things you believe. I heartily subscribe to Wesley's noble saying, "As to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity we think and let think;" but as to all opinions which do strike at the root, we claim that they shall be opposed with the strength that arises from conviction and faith.

(2) I think that we may pass lightly over Wesley's second caution, "That the distinguishing mark of a Christian is not his use of words or phrases of any sort." We need not insist upon this self-evident truth. Every honest man is of opinion that the utterance of cant phrases is no sign that a man is a Christian. Wesley hated cant; he would have been the first to approve

of Dr. Johnson's sensible direction—"Let us clear our minds of cant. "

(3) It is of much more importance that we should consider the third caution which Wesley gives when guiding us in the matter of the distinguishing marks of a Christian. He says that religion does not lie in doing what God has not enjoined, or in abstaining from what He hath not forbidden. In another place he expresses the same thought in another way. He speaks of the form of Christianity he preached as "a manly, noble, generous religion, equally remote from the meanness of superstition, which places religion in doing what God hath not enjoined, or abstaining from what He hath not forbidden; and from the unkindness of bigotry, which confines our affection to our own party, sect or opinion." In the "Character of a Methodist" he especially attacks superstition, and guards us against the delusion that because a man is superstitious he must be religious.

What is superstition? The word denotes excess of believing. A man's faith may be right up to a certain point; then without sufficient warrant he adds something to his faith and begins to believe that he ought to do something which "God hath not enjoined, or to abstain from something which He has not forbidden." After a time these additions to his faith grow in number and importance. They so grow in importance that they often overshadow the truths and the duties which are revealed to us and enjoined upon us by the Word of God. Wesley held that the sufficient warrant for faith and practice is the Bible. He brought doctrines and duties to it as to a touchstone. He gauged their value as it was confirmed by the Word of God.

Wesley's principle is trenchant. It shears off the superfluous. If it were rigorously applied I think its use would tend to the simplification of religion. That is what is needed today. Every student of science knows that the work of the great thinkers upon the material universe is directed to the discovery of one principle which will unify all phenomena. When such a principle is discovered a great cry of gladness springs from the lips of all earnest seekers after truth. The principle is applied, and the confusion of chaos is reduced to order. It was not so when the hint of Wallace, was elaborated by Darwin, and evolution became the unifying principle in biology. What is needed today, as I have already said, is a method by which we can separate the essential from the unessential in the sphere of the religious life.

I have spoken of creeds, those forms of words in which religious truths are expressed. But the ideas of religion have demanded further manifestation. They have found expression in the Church, in rites and ceremonies of worship. As religious truth has sometimes been obscured by the human attempt to express it in words, so has it been obscured by some of the ceremonies of worship. When the Church, enamoured of its own method of worshipping and serving God, insists upon elevating that method into a divine institution, and imposes it, under the severest penalties, upon all men, it commits an outrage on the human conscience and sorely wounds Christianity itself. John Wesley's principle guides us, "Has God enjoined this ceremony, this religious practice?" If He has, we at once obey. If He has not, then we can use it if we find it a human aid to the cultivation of a devout life, or we lay it aside if we find that it hinders

our service of God. When a man is dominated by the belief that human arrangements are of divine obligation he enters upon the dreary shadow-land of supersition.

In addition, Wesley warned us that religion does not consist in abstaining from those things which God hath not forbidden. This warning makes us think of St. Paul's attempt to rescue the beautiful Christian virtue of self-sacrifice from the hands of the ascetics. How many of us have pierced the meaning of this statement: "Bodily exercise profiteth little?" The bodily exercise" to which he referred is explained by the preceding verses of the chapter. In 1 Timothy iv. he is dealing with the rigid ascetic who sternly represses all human passions and desires, and who will not see that God has created many pleasant things in this world which are "to be received with thanksgiving," and "sanctified through the Word of God and prayer." It is a sign of the broad-mindedness of the apostle that he admits that even such a man may derive from his "bodily exercise" a profit which may last for a little time; but he especially instructs Timothy that it is better to "exercise" himself unto godliness. The profit arising from such "exercise" lasts through time into eternity. It is noble teaching, and is needed in the present day. When men insist upon our imitating their example, when they cast us out of the Christian Church because we will not accept them as infallible guides in matters of conduct, we are driven to ask if their view of life is that of our Master. It is necessary to practice self-denial, it is Christian to refuse to please ourselves in indulging in practices which may not be safely followed by those who are influenced by us, by those who judge Christianity by our interpretation of it in our daily life; but,

when we elevate our own disciplinary practices into divine requirements, and make them tests which we ruthlessly apply to our fellow-Christians, then our beliefs are tinged with the gloom of superstition.

When Wesley has dealt with his subject negatively he turns towards its positive aspect, and asks and answers the question, "What, then, is the mark of a Christian?" His answer shows that he is ruled by his own canon concerning the discovery of truth. He goes straight to the Word of God. He takes his definition of religion from the lips of Christ. Let us listen to it as it is spoken with

All the Authority of the Divine Teacher.

The man who is possessed of the historical imagination has little difficulty in painting the scenes of the life of Christ. One of the most remarkable is that in which Jesus, the Light of the World, stands in a crowd which had an unparalleled opportunity for ascertaining from Him infallible information concerning the nature and the service of God. Instead of using the opportunity all that some of the people could do with their marvelous chance was to ask Christ questions to which they could themselves have furnished satisfactory replies. They came with an inquiry about tribute, and the significance of an inscription on a penny had to be explained to them. Men, some cynical skeptics who did not believe in a resurrection, approached Him with a foolish inquiry about resurrection wives. At this distance of time we feel impatient with the ineptitude of these frivolous men. But there was one man in the crowd who had ideas, intuitions, spiritual discernment. He was a Scribe who was weary of ploughing the sand, who was yearning for teaching which would make life bright, vigorous and

fruitful. He had a contempt for the banalities that were being uttered. I fancy that I can see into his mind as he listens to the far-reaching replies of Christ. He is saying to himself, "These men are asking the teacher what they shall think; think about tribute pence, think about resurrection wives. Is it not time that someone asked Him what we should do?" And so he steps up to Christ and says, "Which is the first commandment of all?" This man brings a breeze with him; he makes us breathe fresh air. He is a type of the best kind of religious inquirer. He stands for the men who have thought much about religion, but who have found that there is a higher question than "what shall I think?" The twentieth century is affirming with increasing emphasis that the supreme question to put to the religious teacher is "What shall I do?" It is the inquiry of the practical man who is in earnest about religion and who knows that he can get an answer to it from Christ Himself. To the inquiry of this man, who stood so near the Kingdom of God, Christ immediately responds, and condenses the whole of our duty towards God into the two great commandments: "Hear, O Israel! The Lord your God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This simple statement concerning the "whole duty of man" clears the air. The Scribe's enthusiasm is stirred. "Well, Master," he cries, "Thou hast said the truth, for there is one God; and there is none other but He; and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as

himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices."

Wesley must have had this scene before him when he gave his definition of a Christian. He says, "A Christian is one who has the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him; who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength * * * and this commandment is written on his heart, 'that he who loveth God, love his brother also.' " In my opinion Wesley's definition of a Christian will survive as the fittest. It brings the best men in the Churches together. And not only so. When we have agreed among ourselves, as Christians, that it is sufficient, it will bring out of their antagonism to religion thousands of reasonable men whose antagonism to Christianity arises from misunderstanding. When men know that Christianity means supreme love for God, and universal love for man, they will cease to attack the noblest form of religious life that is possible to us under the sun.

It is not possible to ponder Christ's reply to the Scribe without asking another question. It is our duty to love God, but can we love Him because it is our duty to do so? I do not undervalue the word "duty." It is one of the most majestic words in the English language. But, I ask you, what kind of love is that which is given out of a sense of duty? The love that burns most brightly in the heart is kindled and fed by the thought that He whom we love loves us with an infinite passion. Now Wesley's great work in the nation was to make men and women conscious of the love of God. When he asked, "How did I myself become conscious of that love?" his own expe-

rience furnished the reply. Let us look at that experience for a moment. On May 24, 1736, a group of persons is gathered in a room in Nettleton-court, Aldersgate-street, London; our attention is specially attracted by two men. One of them is reading aloud from a book. It is Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. The other is listening eagerly. He is a young man who has come to the house very unwillingly. A burden of sin weighs grievously upon his conscience. But he listens as the voice of the reader sounds on describing the change which God works in the heart through faith. "Through faith!" Now the light breaks in. Not only does he see, he feels. His heart is "strangely warmed." He feels that he does trust Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and now an assurance is given him that Jesus has taken away his sins—even his—and saved him from the law of sin and death. In Nettleton-court the evening twilight is deepening into night, but the twilight in the heart of John Wesley has broadened into day. "I felt my heart strangely warmed!" That is

A Classic Phrase Among the Methodists.

It marks the moment when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us. For more than fifty years Wesley studied the problem of conversion in all parts of the kingdom. He saw his experience repeated over and over again, and nothing could shake his conviction that the way into the love of God is through the consciousness of God's love for us, a consciousness which comes at the time when we cry in the presence of the cross, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." But, in the estimation of Wesley,

conversion was only the beginning of an experience of God's love. By seeing the love of God more clearly the heart responded to it more completely, until, at last, the "perfect love" was given. Wesley was often attacked because of his doctrine of "perfect love," but he received it from the lips of his Master, and continued to teach it with increasing fervour and confidence. Wesley was a practical man, and he was not satisfied that anyone should merely say that "the love of God was shed abroad in his heart." He asked that the fact should be demonstrated. In turning over the pages of the Bible he found three proofs of the possession of the love of God. You will remember that St. Paul says that it is the duty of a Christian to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks. Wesley accepted that test and affirmed that, if a man's experience possesses all these evidences of the presence of the love of God in him, he is a Christian.

I have no time to dwell upon each of these three characterizing marks of a Christian man. I will touch on one of them. I commend Wesley's bright sketch of the man whose heart has been changed by the influence of God's love. It differs from those stock portraits of the Christian which are occasionally brought out of the skeptic's lumber-room. Especially do I admire his constant insistence on the duty of perpetual joyousness. In this part of his description of a Christian he once more echoes the words of his Master. When Christ conversed with His disciples before He suffered He uttered a sentence which has never yet been understood by the Christian Church: "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy may be in you, and that your joy

may be fulfilled." That sentence should modify the view we take of Christ as "the Man of sorrows" who wears constantly a crown of thorns. In the words I have quoted He allows us to see the depths of His heart. He lifts the veil, and we understand what is meant by His rejoicing in spirit. In Him there shines the glory of a great joy. It is true that the joy has not filled up to the full. It was diminished by the thoughts which concerned the world's sin and sorrow, and the redemption which He had to work out on the cross. But its light was intense and steady. Looking upon the troubled faces of His friends, He said to them in effect, "I earnestly desire that you should possess My joy, My joy unshadowed, My joy in its perfection." Perfect joy springing out of perfect love, that was the blessing which Christ desired for His disciples. Do we understand what Christ meant? Wesley discerned the significance of his Master's words, and insisted upon perpetual rejoicing as a mark of the possession of the love of God. If a man professed to be a Christian but was morose and gloomy, if his whole life was spent in murmuring and complaining, Wesley told him that he suspected that the love of God had not been shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost. I think that we are drawing nearer to the position of Wesley, and, better still, to the position of his Master. When we reach it the building up of the Kingdom of God will rapidly advance.

When Wesley has dealt with the first commandment he has something to say about the second, which, according to the statement of Christ, is "like unto it." I am glad that Christ has declared the value of the sec-

ond commandment. Religious people are apt to depreciate it, and to assign it a subordinate place. "Like unto it," says Christ. I am much impressed with the way in which the importance of the love of our neighbor is magnified by the great Teacher. Let me give one illustration. In the Sermon on the Mount He insists upon the necessity of being reconciled to those whom we have offended. He pictures a man who is in the very act of offering his gift at the altar who suddenly remembers that his brother has something against him. His arm is stretched out to present a gift to God. Christ whispers to him, "Much as God prizes your gift, He will wait till you have sought out and found the man against whom you have offended. It may take you some time to effect a reconciliation, but God will wait." I wish we could understand this marvelous teaching, that God would rather be kept waiting for our worship and our gifts than that our offended brother should be kept waiting for the words that will lead to reconciliation. That is the truth which is little appreciated by the Church today.

Far as we are behind in our estimate of the value of the second commandment, I think that we may say that

Our "Neighbor" is Gradually Emerging

from the gloom of the background in which we have placed him. As he becomes more clearly defined we discover that it is easier for some of us to obey the first commandment than the second. Our study of God leads us to see that He is Light, and that in Him is no darkness at all. When we look at our neighbor we often conclude that he is darkness, and that in him there is no light. It is impossible for us to love him. Of

course we give him that conventional love which we pay to all men, but it does not stir our pulses or lead us into any act of self-sacrifice in his behalf. We are like the priest and Levite in the parable. Our neighbor is a disagreeable spectacle, and we pass by on the other side. It is, indeed, hard to love our fellow-man. He is not only uninteresting, repulsive, but he is so disappointing. I have thought about that saying of Helvetius, "In order to love mankind we must expect little from them," and have been tempted to admit its truth. It sounds sensible; it seems the verdict of a man who has really tried to love his fellows, but has had his spirit broken by repeated disappointments. It is an aphorism that will be accepted by many who are neither cynical nor hard-hearted.

Grave as the indictment which we draw up against our neighbor, still we are confronted by the imperative command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." How can we obey the command? I have shown that it is through the love of God that we love God. I will now go a step further and say that it is through the love of God that we love our neighbor. When the love of God comes into our hearts it kindles there an intense love of our fellows. We love them, not because we expect little of them, but we expect much of them. We see in them the possibilities which are being realized in ourselves. We value our neighbor because God's mercy has revealed to us our own value. Taking self as our standard we say, "This man can be made all that God has made me." We see ourselves led by the light of God's love into the rich inheritance of the Christian man, and we know that our neighbor can

accompany us in our journey, and enjoy with us the best things of earth and heaven. To love God and to appreciate highly the possibilities of our fellows is the Christian way that leads to the love of your neighbor.

In dealing with the second commandment Wesley insists upon something that is even more difficult than the love of our neighbor; it is the love of our enemies. It is a hard saying; but it is consistent with the whole trend of the teaching of Christ. We cannot be Christian if we hate our enemies. I think that the power which God gives a man to love His enemy is one of His most astonishing gifts. That gift is in the possession of some persons. They go about this earth manifesting nothing but peace and goodwill to all mankind. Now, where have they learned the secret? the understanding of which seems so far out of our reach. They have learned it at the place where they first felt the love of God in its vitalizing, energizing, and transforming power. No man here can resist the pathos of that scene when Christ, on the cross, prays for His murderers. The sublimity of that act awes us into silence. Through the ages His followers have brooded upon His words; they have been upon the lips of thousands of men and women who have laid down their lives for His sake. I hold that the nobility of the Christian religion is indicated by the fact that it enables its true disciples to love their enemies. I commend to you what Wesley says concerning this supreme virtue. He tells us that it is possible for a Christian to love his enemies because the love of God has purified his heart from all revengeful passions, from envy, malice, and wrath, from every unkind temper or malign affection. It hath cleansed him from pride and

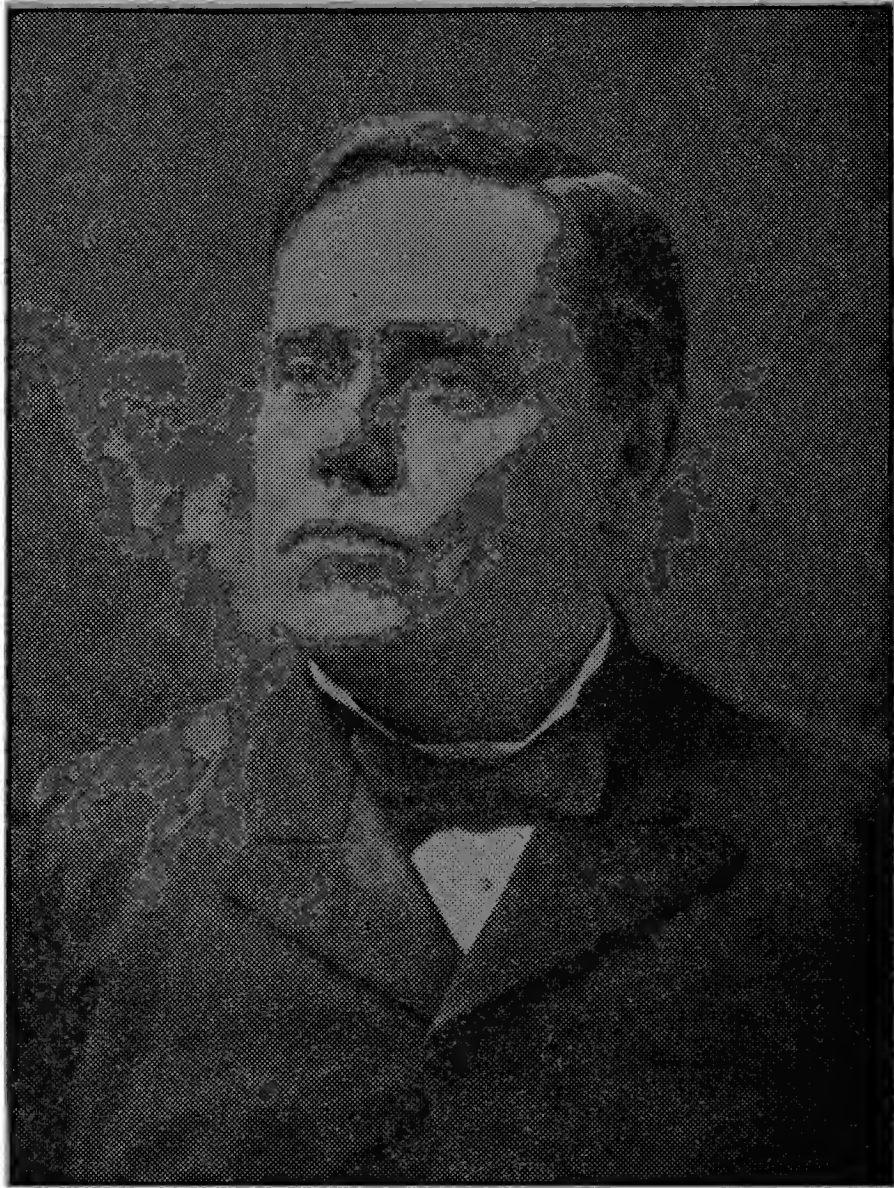
haughtiness of spirit whereof alone cometh contention. I do not wonder that Wesley placed on the title-page of his pamphlet the modest words, "Not as though I had already attained." That sentence the Church, as a whole, may well adopt for itself.

There is only one other point to which I must direct your attention. I have said that John Wesley was a practical man. In enumerating the marks of a Christian he insists that where the love of God and man is in the heart it will be shown by its fruits. If a man loves God he will keep His commandments; if he loves men he will do them all the good he can both in body and soul. John Wesley was not content when a man uttered beautiful words about God, and philanthropic sentiments about his fellows. He tested all professions by deeds. I think you will admit that the test he applied was legitimate, and that, in applying it, he followed the example of his Master.

I have derived my material for discovering John Wesley's ideas of a Christian from his "Character of a Methodist." If I wanted to show you what Wesley deemed to be fruits of the love of God and man which should be produced by a Christian, I should lay aside the pamphlet we have been considering, and take up the leaflet which contains the "Rules" which he drew up for the "Society of the People called Methodists." The Rules show what he expected the Christian to do. I have no time to speak about the contents of this remarkable document. I mention it that those who are interested in Wesley's conception of the Christian character may complete their studies; and I also mention it in order that I may say that the verdict which I ask you to give to-

day on the correctness of Wesley's ideal of Christianity is being anticipated. In 1771, a woman who had been excluded from the Methodist Society by John Nelson stood charged at the York Assizes with a capital crime. Nelson was subpoenaed to appear in court to assign his reasons for having put this woman out of the Society. He produced the leaflet I have mentioned and began to read its contents. He reached the rule which forbids "Borrowing without a probability of paying, or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them." When he had read it he stopped, and said to the judge, "My lord, this was my reason for dismissing this woman from the Society to which I belong." The judge arose and said, "Good morality, Mr. Nelson." Being seated again he desired that the rest of the rules should be read to him. After hearing them his lordship said emphatically to the court, "Gentlemen, this is true Christianity!"

CHRISTIAN WATCHFULNESS
OR
READINESS TO LIVE OR DIE



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Christian Watchfulness

OR

Readiness to Live or Die

Text: Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them.

But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

The first word of this beautiful but solemn parable carries us beyond the limits of time and sense. "Then!" It bears us into the eternities, and brings us face to face

with final things and fixed destinies. It is ever thus our Lord and his Apostles impart religious truth to men. They always seek to bring to bear on the things of time the powers of the world to come. They enforce the obligations of religious life on earth by appealing to motives which take their rise in unearthly heights.

This method of the Master and the writers of the New Testament is rejected by moralists of a mundane mould. They characterize such appeals to heavenly conditions and relations as a dreamy "Other-Worldliness," more unworthy and more injurious than the worldliness which is denounced by the Holy Scriptures and by the Church of God. But "this their way is their folly." An adequate apprehension of the world to come is necessary to a just view of the world that now is. As the provincial and untravelled man magnifies out of all proportion the immediate events and conditions of his own neighborhood, and thereby fails to maintain a proper poise and patience amid his surroundings and utterly ignores the widest relations of life, so the earth-bound soul sees not proportionately the things of earth in their true perspective and also fails of heaven. With reference to eternal things, he is utterly provincial and narrow. He is near-sighted and can not see afar off, nor truly value the most enduring interest of this world and of all worlds. His dim vision leads him to walk and work as an ignoble time-server, in that he lives for time and is impoverished in heart and purpose by the contracted out-look of his life. He is unprepared to live because, he is not ready to die. He cannot serve the present world well because he blindly and stubbornly declines the service of heaven. But the mighty spirits

of all the ages, who have wrought most beneficently for mankind have been they who had most respect for the recompense of reward set before them, and who endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

It is with a view to elevating the lives of all his followers to this sublime level, that the Master spoke this parable, inculcating the duty of Christian watchfulness. Some who have assumed to be wise above what is written, if indeed they do not affect a benevolence more unselfish than the love of Christ, would hold in dis-esteem the lesson cast in such a form; they would have it that it appeals to selfish fear in all its development, and justifies by implication, the selfish conduct of the wise virgins who in the hour of extremity would not divide their oil with their foolish and improvident companions. This sort of criticism is but poor pottering with sacred things. It is of the kind that would throw away Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," the greatest allegory in literature, because the almost-inspired author did not mar his story by undertaking to present every possible phase of truth in one composition. The Master makes in this parable a wholesome appeal to that godly fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom. There is a faculty in the human soul which calls for such an appeal, and he must revise nature as well as correct the wisdom of the Lord himself, who would repudiate such appeals. The parable is addressed to a lawful and devout self love; it makes no appeal to selfishness. Self-love is a proper instinct which condemns suicide as it refuses fool-hardiness. Selfishness is but a poor mimicry of this divinely implanted instinct and takes risks on self that it may grasp greedily

things. The wise Teacher, who knew what was in man, taught us to respect the true self and to take no chances on its Salvation. He would have us save our souls at all costs, and in this parable He suggests in solemn form the question He elsewhere presses with awful earnestness, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

This parable of the virgins is not addressed primarily to the indifferent and the unconverted, but rather to them who feel some interest in leading a Christian life, and who put forth some effort to meet the responsibilities and win the great reward of such a life. The foolish virgins quite as truly as their wiser companions intended to be present at the marriage supper and put forth some effort and some expenditure with reference to that end; they bought festal apparel, provided themselves with lamps and in their lamps they had some oil. They seem however, to have been of that class, who fearing to be righteous over-much are not righteous enough, they who wish to be religious at the smallest possible cost.

Nor were the wise more watchful than the foolish if by watchfulness we mean unbroken wakefulness and incessant looking out for the coming of the Bridegroom. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept."

Christian watchfulness does not consist in being always on the lookout, but in being always ready. He who is truly devoted to God, and who is ready to live or die, is not one who thinks of God every moment, but he is one who by the very posture and purpose of life, gives himself to self-forgetful service which oftentimes absorbs all his thought. The man who truly loves his

wife is not he who thinks of her all the time, but he who thinks of her as a knight when she is in his mind, and often toils even to momentary forgetfulness of her to give her comfort and pleasure. The godly man is not he who morbidly dwells on the thought of God, but he who moves under a filial purpose which leads him to think reverently of his Father in heaven when he does think of Him, and to serve Him faithfully always. There was nothing better to do than for the virgins to sleep without a thought of the bridegroom while he tarried—that they might be the better prepared to give him proper welcome when he came; but the fact of his coming would control, while thus sleeping, even the purpose of their slumber, as it would also dominate the course of their conduct in waking hours.

To have remained yawningly awake in the fore-part of the night in order to advertise the profession of unusual devotion to the Bridegroom would have made a spectacle, but it would have served no purpose of loyalty. True piety is never mixed with affected sanctity and morbid extravagance. Its head is not deranged by “fixed ideas,” but its life is controlled by fixed principles. “Fixed ideas” are symptoms of insanity; fixed character is unfailing love of God in the soul, and is life to the spirit and health to the bones.

The difference between the wise and the foolish virgins, is not discernible in anything of an outward nature. If one had come upon them in their slumber, by nothing visible could he have distinguished the wise from the foolish. They were dressed alike, their lamps were in reach, and the regular breathing of each bespoke a slumber common to all. The difference was found in

the fullness of oil possessed by the one and the scanty stock provided by the other. In the inmost soul, where is stored the reserve power of a faith which clings to God at all cost; is found the preparation of the soul for every crisis, whether the crisis be an unexpected trial in life, or the end of all. The soul which is not enriched by such a reserve takes the gravest chances on the most solemn interests, and, therefore, always fails.

A parallel Scripture which enforces the same great lesson, is that wherein the Master contrasted the wise and foolish builders. The wise man was not content with a house well built above ground; he had respect to the invisible foundation on bed rock, and so he digged deep and rested his structure on such a basis. The crisis came when he needed the strength of such a foundation to resist the tempest which beat upon his house. In that trying hour it withstood the winds and rains not by what was seen, but by the strength of its invisible foundations.

The foolish builder also provided him a house, but he wished shelter at the least possible cost. He therefore built a house which was good enough for fair weather but worse than useless in the crisis when most he needed a roof above his head. The rains descended, and the winds blew, and the floods beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof, for it was founded upon the sand.

What then shall we say, drawing our conclusion from these and other Scriptures, is the characteristic element in Christian watchfulness? Is it not thoroughness? Is it not that whole-hearted determination to serve God at all costs, and which refuses every temptation to cheap-

ness in religion, shoddiness in character, and will take no chance on the future? Is it not that earnestness which makes the Kingdom of God and His righteousness the one indispensable thing in earth and heaven? To a soul filled with such a spirit, there is such fervent love of the Bridegroom, that it will not take chances on falling short of his approval or failing to be present at the bridal hour. It would rather have more oil than was necessary, and waste the surplus, than fall short of a sufficiency. The wise virgins would take chances on oil but they would take no risk on the privilege and duty of meeting the Bridegroom, while, on the other hand, the foolish virgins counted oil more dear than the Bridegroom's favor. The want of the spirit of the wise was the disqualification that excluded the foolish from the festivities of the marriage. The heart which is more set on saving oil than seeing the Bridegroom, could only be a poor and unsympathetic attendant on such a joyous celebration. Had the Bridegroom come early in the night, this unfitness would not have been revealed, but it would nevertheless have been on them, though unrevealed. Or, could they have known that he would have delayed his coming, with equal stinginess they would have dealt economically with their scanty stock, and thus also have disguised their cold heartedness towards him. It was the "unexpected that happened," and thus was disclosed not only that their vessels were empty of oil but that their hearts were empty of love. The empty vessels showed the vacant souls. By such a test it was shown how unsuitable they were for the feast.

Thus it has often been seen that those who with ir-

reverent curiosity seek to pry into the secrets of that "day and hour which no man knoweth, no, not the angels of heaven, but the Father," and who undertake with conceited confidence and tortuous exegesis to fix the time of His coming, when their programme fails their piety perishes with it. They make more of the coming of the Lord, than they do of the person of the Lord, and when He comes not according to their dates they lose faith in His power and renounce His authority. But wise souls, taught of the Spirit, with ungrudging devotion and unreserved consecration fix their hearts on God and establish with Him such relations as prepare them for His long tarrying or His sudden appearance. If He tarry and remain invisible they endure as seeing Him who is unseen, and whom not having seen they love; if He come quickly, having oil in their vessels without fear or agitation, they go out to meet Him with rejoicing.

Their relation to the Lord is like that of a wife to her husband, whose love is undiminished by distance and unaffected by absence because she belongs to him alone. They yearn for Him in His absence and rejoice in His presence, but "whether present or absent they are the Lord's."

The terms of the parable do not permit us to overlook the wisdom of watchfulness, and the folly of the want of it. The foolish virgins lost what little investment they made of oil and of effort, because they made no more. If the occasion of the Bridegroom's coming was worthy of their interest it called for such effort and expenditure as would exclude the possibility of failure; if it was not worth that much it was not worth even

the degree of attention they bestowed upon it. God must be everything to the soul, or nothing; and at last the real God of every soul is that object to obtain which and to retain which it is ready to sacrifice all else. How foolish is half-hearted piety!

A God who would be satisfied with half a heart is unworthy of any love, and a soul which seems to divide itself between its lusts and its Lord misses both worlds. It forfeits the favor of God and fritters away its own energies on time. Supreme silliness and sin!

Its folly is only exceeded by its insincerity and its utter failure is assured by its blind folly. Wise is the spirit which gives itself not with a cold and calculating service, but with a sublime self-abandon to the work and will of God. The wisdom of such souls is that wisdom which cometh down from above, and which, is not surprised and confounded by the crises of life, nor overwhelmed by the revelations of the spiritual world. It never fails because it never foolishly dreams that it can have relations to God hereafter other than those it cherishes here. The crises of life and the event of death reveal but do not revolutionize the character of such souls.

In the crisis of an unexpected hour the foolish virgins became desperately in earnest, but it was an earnestness which betrayed its character by its unseasonableness; it came too late. In truth, there was no change of spirit from the temper of half heartedness in which they set out, to the vain lamentations with which they sought admittance after the door was shut. The spirit that procrastinates to do known duty is of the same essence, as the spirit which undertakes duty in a half hearted

way. Both propose to do what they are obliged to do, but no more and no sooner than can be helped. The man who puts off his return to God, and pleads the possibility of death-bed repentance, does thereby show that he would never return to God at all if he did not have to die. Over such a man the terrors of death have more dominion than the authority of God's law, and his affections cling to the things of earth rather than to the divine Father's heart. He is Balaam wishing that he may have the death of the righteous, if he must die, but in his soul of souls, he wishes he could live in this world always. He would like to have the pearl of great price, if there is to be a time when none will be safe who are without the pearl, but he wishes to drive the best bargain that he can in its purchase, and he will not make the trade except after the same manner in which he secures a railway ticket—only when he is obliged to go. He does not wish to make one effort or one prayer too many. If he must choose between heaven or hell he prefers heaven to hell, but there is only one other place that he would more hate to go to than to hell, and that is heaven. In that fair haven he will take shelter if driven there on the principle, "Of any port in a storm."

It is unthinkable that a soul in such a state can ever enter heaven. Heaven is a place prepared for the prepared, and not a land-locked harbor for piratical souls, driven from the high seas of earth, after taking such spoils of time as they were able to carry away. Against the unprepared the door is shut.

Character tends more and more to fixedness and in the end fixes destiny. The end of earth's probation is a

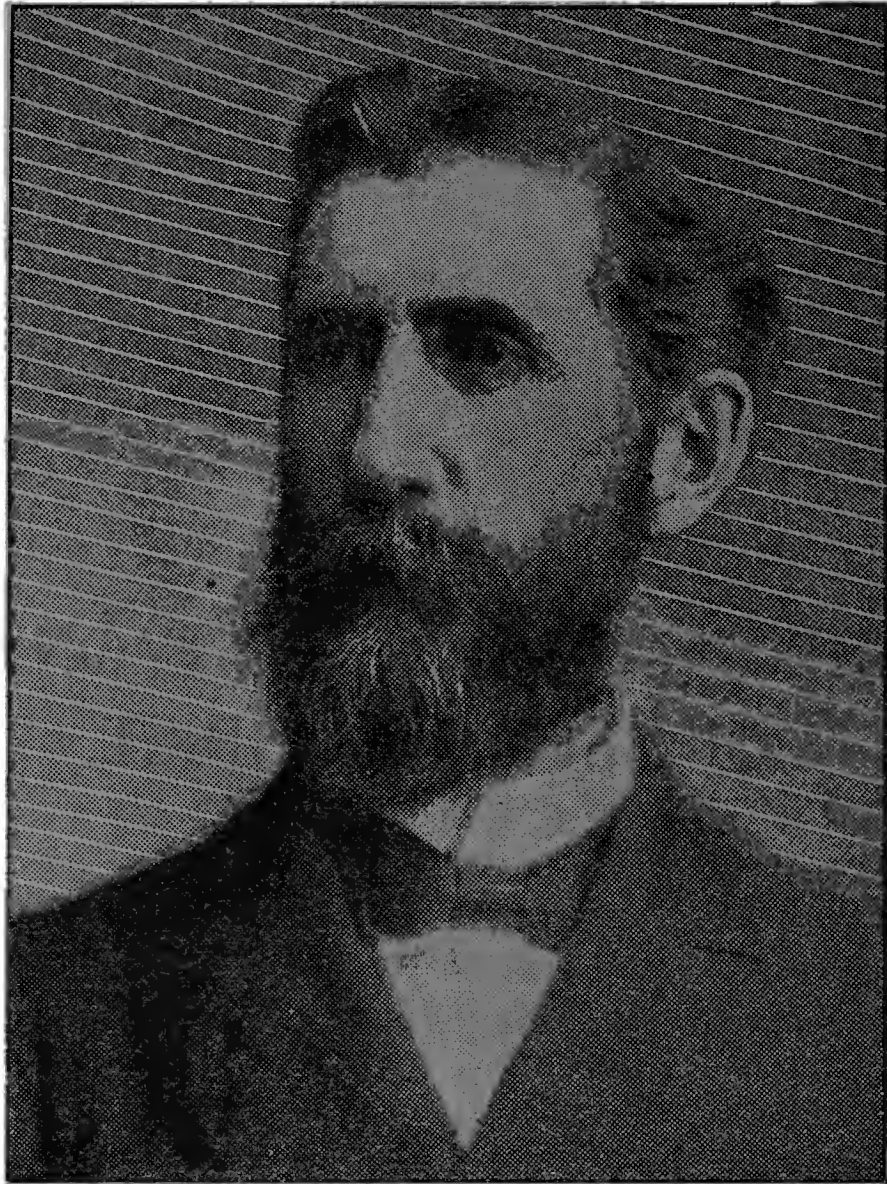
fixed character and a fixed place, every soul going to its own place. The bad can no more rise out of their doom than the good can fall out of their blessedness. Lazarus is secure in Abraham's bosom, and Dives knows too well how final is his state to hope for escape or ask for extrication. Even in torment he knows that the entrance to perdition is open and hence he prays that his brothers may be warned against it; but he knows also that there is no exit, and dares not suggest a prayer for deliverance. The sentimentality that prates in the pulpit, about "endless hope" is a folly which finds no encouragement in Scripture, no basis in psychology, and no ground in the analogies of nature. While singing its Siren song of senseless optimism it only allures to deathless despair. All the teachings of revelation and all the suggestions of nature, lead us to the conclusion that the real difficulty of reason is not to comprehend how any can be lost, but to understand how any can be saved. Nature knows no room for repentance, and offers no remedies for sin. Salvation, according to the Scriptures, is the achievement, under grace, of strenuous souls, who "strive—agonize—to enter in at the strait gate."

At last the wise virgins with all their reserve of oil had none to spare. Not in heartlessness, but out of the fixed conditions that no wishing could change, answer they the request of their foolish companions, "Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you." The good man who may be accounted "righteous over-much" by the worldly and half hearted, finds in life's crises that he has no goodness to spare—and if he had, character is not transferable. In the bitterness of his grief, David

may cry out for the rebellious Adsalom, "Would God I had died for thee, My Son!" but his cry is all in vain. Only one is able by death to make atonement for sin, and we need all the benefits of even that infinite sacrifice for our redemption. If that be rejected there remaineth nothing "but a certain fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." For the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of redeeming love, says "If He that despised Moses law died without mercy under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace." And "if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour, wherein the Son of Man cometh," and when He cometh the door will be shut, forbidding the entrance of the foolish, and the exit of the wise. Wherever the foolish may go it is into the outer darkness; it can not be that the good and the bad reach at last the same place, since they are so wide apart in character. The lines of godliness and godlessness, light and darkness, life and death, run at right angles in this world, and it is unthinkable that, however infinitely projected, they should ever converge upon the same point.

THE BELIEVER'S TESTIMONY
CONCERNING CHRIST.



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The Believer's Testimony Concerning Christ

Matt. xvi. 15: "But whom say ye that I am?"

Not least noticeable, among the many striking characteristics that marked our Saviour's intercourse with His beloved disciples, were the thoughtful, earnest, penetrating questions that He occasionally addressed to them. And He did not thus question them when He was surrounded by the great multitude that crowded about Him to witness His miracles and to listen to His wondrous words, but rather when He was alone with them, apart on the mountain side or away in the desert. These simple, heartsearching questions, moreover, were addressed not so much to their minds as to their hearts, not so much to stimulate their intellects to activity, as to quicken their moral sensibilities to keener perceptions of the truth. He questioned them not to increase His own knowledge, but rather to increase theirs; not to find out how much they knew, but rather to shew them how little they knew; nor yet to draw out from them an expression of their opinion, but rather to evoke from them a declaration of their faith.

The question of our text, the reader will remember, was preceded by a similar one in which our Saviour asked His disciples as to what the world thought of Him: "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" And then: "Whom do ye say that I am?" Peter, in behalf of the disciples, replied, "Thou art the Christ, the

Son of the living God.” And our Saviour said in answer to Peter that “upon this rock He would build His Church, and the gates of hell should not prevail against it.” The great truth then to which I invite your attention, and which, in the light of the context, I deduce from the words of my text, is this: The vital relation of the believer’s testimony concerning Christ to the life of the Church.

The most prominent characteristic of the apostolic preaching was its witness-bearing—its testimony character. Christ never designed that those who had arrived at a saving knowledge of the truth should keep this knowledge to themselves. But while the great commission was, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel,” this commission was not given until Christ had first instructed His disciples as to what their preaching should consist in. “Ye are to be my witnesses,” was His constant declaration unto them. They were to go forth testifying as to what they had seen and heard; and all their testimony culminated in this grand truth, that “Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

It is a curious fact, worthy of our observation in passing, that the Greek word for witness was “martus” a martyr, conveying the idea that a witness to the great facts of Christianity in those heroic days when the foundations of the Church were being laid, was one who gave in his testimony at the risk of his life. And how forcibly was this meaning of the word exemplified in the experience of the holy apostles, every one of whom sealed the testimony that he bore to the truth with his own life blood, with possibly one exception. Surely our Saviour seems here to have been but catechising

and instructing His apostles in regard to the testimony which they should be prepared to render as to His divine character, for very well did He know that they would have to stand before heathen courts and answer this very same question, "Whom do ye say that Jesus is?" And their testimony, that "He was verily the Son of the living God," did not always evoke the approval which Christ here gave it; for the sequel proved that it **was** for bearing this very testimony that they, one by one, eventually yielded up their lives at the martyr's stake. And so, too, this meaning of the word was yet further exemplified in the history of the early Church, when there were so many sad and painful examples wherein the testimony, borne by the early disciples, was crowned with martyrdom. We sometimes look upon that sad, dark day as the black page in our Church's history; but, it shines with unearthly splendor, above all the other pages that record her progress, when we look with the sainted John and see under the altar, hard by the very throne of God, the souls of them that were slain for the word of His truth and for the testimony which they bore. And white robes, we are told, were given unto every one of them.

The contrast which our Saviour here institutes between what men said and thought of Him, and what the disciples said and thought is very marked and significant; and, to get at the full meaning of our text, we will do well to adopt the method which He here uses of contrasting the two opinions concerning Him. As we have already observed, therefore, His first question was, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" The disciples reply. "Some say that Thou art John the

Baptist, some Elias, some Jeremias, or one of the prophets." "Herod thinks that Thou art John the Baptist, arisen from the dead and come to avenge his cruel murder; others that Thou art that prophet that was to come; others that Thou art Jeremias or one of the prophets,—they are in doubt, they can't tell who, they are divided as to who Thou art." Let us notice that while they are divided as to who Christ is, they all agree in thinking Him not only a very remarkable person, but one of the divinely inspired prophets of old come to life again. They are impressed with the fact that there is something more than ordinarily human in this wonderful man.

But the most noticeable thing to me, in this whole conversation, is the utter indifference with which our Lord here treats the testimony of the world in regard to his character, dismissing all these opinions without even a passing remark. He manifests no concern whatever in regard to the fact that they did not rightly appreciate His character. And thus it seems as if our Saviour would say, "It is unimportant what the world thinks of me. I care not what opinion unregenerate men may hold concerning me. It matters not what Herod and his courtiers, what the prejudiced Jews, the haughty Pharisees, the speculating Sadducees, the unregenerate multitude—it matters not what they may think of the Son of Man. They are not expected to know me, and, in their unregenerate state, they cannot know me. All this is as nothing. But the great question is this: Whom do ye say that I am? Whom do ye, my disciples, ye who have seen my life, both public

and private, who have witnessed my many miracles, who have supped with me and prayed with me, ye who have followed me through all these years and known me best—whom do ye say that I am?” Peter saith unto Him: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”—every word pregnant with meaning and burning with emphasis. His answer is not, mind you, “I suppose or we suppose, that Thou art the Christ;” but, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” No mere expression of opinion about it; but the deep and honest conviction of an earnest human soul—a truth not revealed to him by flesh and blood, not the conclusion of his own reasoning or the fruit of his own intellect: but a truth wrought into his conscious being and engrafted, as it were, into his very soul by the power of the Holy Ghost. And thus it is with all spiritual truth that is inwrought into the believer’s soul—it is a revelation of the Holy Ghost and is a part of man’s own conscious knowledge.

And herein our great Exemplar would teach us a lesson, viz: To consider it a thing of no great importance that the unregenerate multitude have incorrect and erroneous opinions concerning Christ; and, above all, would He teach us not to let our faith be disturbed in the least, because unregenerate men fail to see, or even go so far as to deny, the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. For it is now, just as it was then, the unregenerate world is divided as to who Christ is. Among men there are various opinions concerning Him, all of which fall just as far below His true character, as did the opinions of men expressed in the days of the apostles. Some say He was a mere man, a very remarkable man, it is true,

but still nothing more than a human being. The most perfect one, it may be, that ever lived, the highest type of manhood of which we have any record; but still He was nothing more than a pure, noble, magnanimous human soul. Others think Him more than a mere man—what the ancients, perhaps, would call a hero, one partly man and partly God. Some great and lofty human soul into whom the Creator of all things infused something of His own nature, and then sent Him into the earth to accomplish some great purpose—and that He proved a blessing to the world just as Seneca, as Socrates, as Washington, or any other great and good man did. But all these opinions are unimportant. It matters not what Strauss, or Renan, or John Stuart Mill, or Herbert Spencer, or the rationalists, or the skeptics, what they all think concerning Christ. They may be, and doubtless often are, very honest men; and their opinions may be very candid and, in some sense, very complimentary concerning Him. They may write a life of Him which may prove as interesting as a romance—and, indeed, such a life has been written. They may make His life poetic, His character sublime, His career heroic. They may cast a halo of human grandeur about His person and may make His manhood to appear as beautiful and as worthy of admiration as the masterpiece of an artist. All this they, as children of this world, often wiser in their day and generation than the children of light,—all this they may do. But here they must stop.

What did our Lord mean when he said to Peter, just after he made this confession of faith in his divinity. that “flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee,

but my Father which is in heaven"? He meant to say that a saving apprehension of Jesus Christ as the divine Son of God is not the work of the carnal mind of man. He meant to teach that only such processes of the human mind as may be accompanied by the influences of the Holy Spirit can ever be expected to lead to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The carnal mind of man can never in its intellectual pride discover the divine. It can discover the man, a beautiful, sublime, heroic man; but it can go no further. It is just as true in regard to God the Son as it is in regard to God the Father, that the world by wisdom knows not God and by searching it can not find Him out. Yes, men of the world may discover the man in Christ, but the God they can never find. It is a spiritual truth and must be spiritually discerned. God has never made the human intellect and human reason the channel through which we are to arrive at a correct and saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But what He has hid from the wise and the prudent He has revealed unto babes. "Even so, O Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." This being true, it is folly for a Christian to be disturbed, because some of the great thinkers and scholars and philosophers say that they, forsooth, can see nothing more in the Son of Man than a John the Baptist, or an Elias, or a Jeremias, or than some great prophet. If "flesh and blood" could see in Christ all that the believer can see in Him, then would it follow that the Christian's knowledge concerning Christ is no better, no deeper, no fuller, no more satisfying than the skeptic's knowledge of Him; and would thus prove that what the Christian calls saving faith in Christ is

nothing more than an intellectual belief—and hence nothing more than a revelation of flesh and blood. Instead, then, of weakening the Christian's faith, it should rather strengthen it, when men who pride themselves in testing everything by reason before they accept, and in making reason the measure and ground of all their belief, say that they see not the God in Jesus Christ. For it only proves what the Scripture says when it affirms that "the world by wisdom knows not God," and when it implies that "by searching it can not find him out."

We observe, then, by thus contrasting the two opinions concerning Christ, that in the one case there is doubt, perplexity, uncertainty—they think thus and so, but they can't tell who He is: in the other case there is certainty—"Thou art the Christ"—no doubt about it. Again, we notice that the opinions of men are various, different, discordant, contradictory—some say one thing, some another: among the disciples there is accord, agreement, unanimity—so much so that one man here answers for the whole. Among all true believers there is but one opinion concerning Christ. Differ as Christians may, on many points, they are all one as to who Christ is. In the one case there is confusion, superstition—they imagine Him to be a ghost, one raised from the dead: in the other there is intelligent, well defined faith. The one party see nothing but a man, though a remarkable man it may be; the other discern both man and God—not only the Christ, the Messiah, the promised one, but the "Son of the living God." The one party see but the prophet: the other the prophet, the

priest and the King. The one see only a son of man; the other see in Him the Son of God.

We come now, in the second place, to consider the vital relation which this testimony of the true believer sustains to the life of the Church. And this we shall consider in two aspects: first, in regard to the Church collectively; and, secondly, the relation it bears to the life of each individual Christian.

Without entering here into an exegetical discussion as to what Christ meant when He said in reply to Peter, "Upon this rock, I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," and assuming that inasmuch as this reply of our Lord was evoked by the testimony which Peter had just rendered as to His divine character, it should most naturally have reference to the truth contained in that confession—assuming this, we learn that the believer's testimony sustains a most important and vital relation to the Church of God. So vital is this relation that it is here represented as the foundation of the Church. The confession of Saint Peter here contains the very pith and marrow of the gospel and may well be made the foundation of the Church. It contains the truth, yea that grandest and most momentous of all truths, that Jesus Christ is very man and very God, and verily upon the preaching of this truth shall the Church of God be built up. In First Corinthians iii. 11, we have Christ represented as the only true foundation of the Church and the apostles as the builders—where we learn that, though the workmen and the builders may come and go, yet the foundation, being once laid, must stand secure forever. Here the grand truth is the same, though the presentation of it is slight-

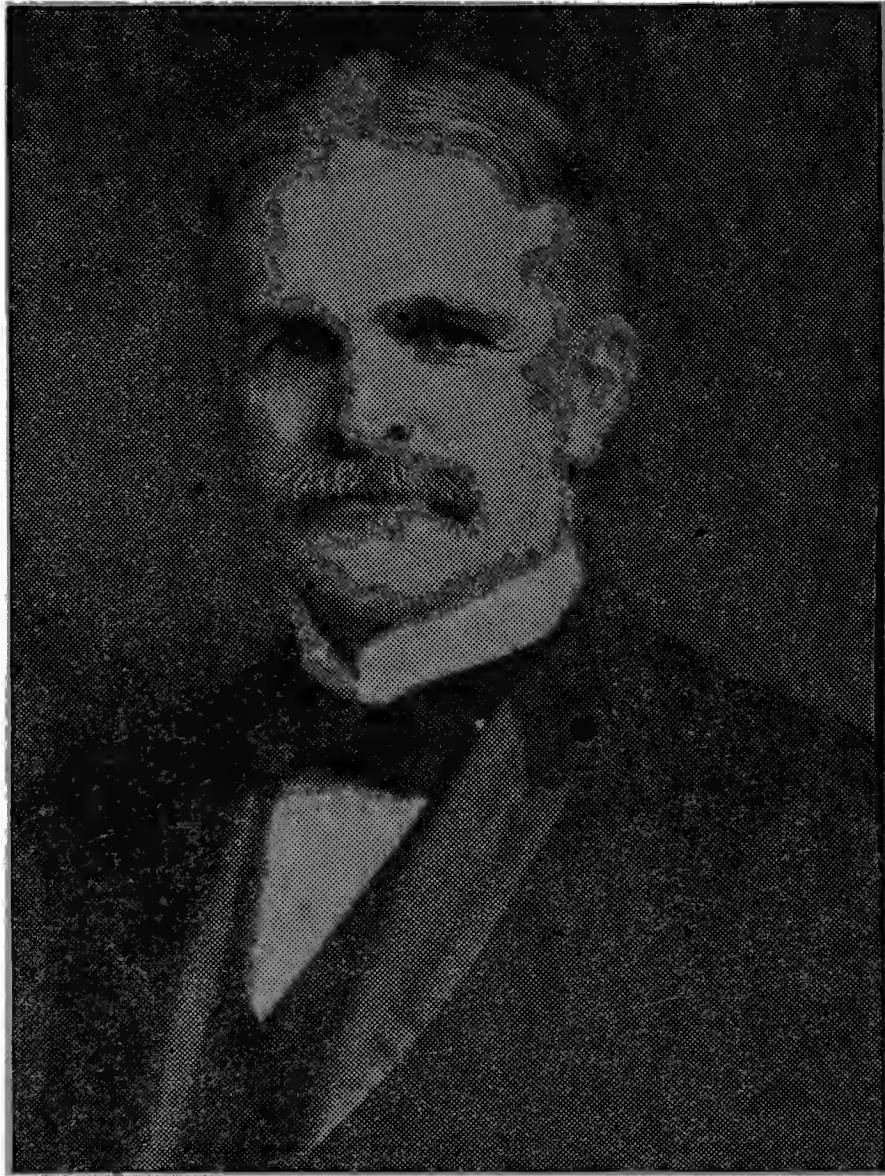
ly different. The true confession of the believer is here represented as the foundation and Christ as the eternal builder. What a grand truth, then, is it for us to realize that if we only confess Christ aright and bear a truthful testimony as to His divine character, that He has promised to make our confession and our testimony a foundation upon which He Himself will build. And what a comforting thought should it be to us to know that while we are engaged in trying to build up Christ's Church upon the earth, we are yet but co-workers together with Him, and as it is true of that city which is "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," so it is true of this earthly structure, that its grand maker and builder and architect is God—He the grand builder, we His workmen.

And finally, let us consider the relation which the believer's testimony concerning Christ sustains to his own Christian life. If it is true that this testimony is in a sense, the foundation of the Church, it is yet more true that, in a still higher sense, it is the foundation of the life of every individual believer. "Whom do ye say that Christ is?" The answer to this question determines every man's character. You can put no more heartsearching question to yourself than this, "What do I think concerning Christ?"—"what is my opinion concerning the Son of Man?" Where in all history, sacred or profane, can you find another such momentous question out of the issues of which are life and death. For according as we answer this question wrongly or rightly, even so are we found to be the sons of darkness or the children of light. About the multitudes of things and persons that are and have been our opinions

may be thus and so, without perhaps having any influence upon our own characters. But in regard to the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ we can have but one opinion, if we would be numbered among His faithful and elect followers. And blessed is the man who, when he retires into the secret chambers of his own life, as the High Priest retired into the holy of holies, and there solemnly and earnestly propounds to himself the heart-searching question, "Whom do I say Christ is?"—thrice happy that man whose faith then and there finds its fittest expression in the confession of St. Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This is the creed of every new born soul that passes from the darkness of this world into the light and liberty of God's children.

When Christ, after years of training, had brought His disciples up to the point where they believed and spontaneously confessed that he was "the Son of the living God," then, and not till then, could He say that the foundation rock of experience and faith and testimony was laid upon which He would build His Church; then, and not till then, could He say, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" then, and not till then could He talk freely about His leaving them, about his crucifixion and death, and how that greater works than He had done should be accomplished when He was gone. It matters little what the world of sceptics and sinners may say about our Lord so long as believers are ready to testify with one voice and say, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This is what makes the foundation of the Church like the solid rock and gives it a power against which the gates of hell can never prevail.

“THE INTERPRETATION OF LIFE”



BISHOP WILLIAM FRASER McDOWELL,
Methodist Episcopal Church.

“The Interpretation of Life.”

Text: Luke iv. 16-21.

There are at least three good entrances to this scene. We could come in by a study of Christ's use of a quotation. The phrase that leaps from literature and finds vital utterance in life's sacramental moments reveals the man as well as the quotation. The statesman who talks platitudes when his country lays supreme burdens on him shows that he is unworthy. Small talk and cheap talk are alike forbidden when the tides of life are running high. The statesman to whose lips come sentences from Washington's Farewell Address or Lincoln's Gettysburg oration reveals by his use of those immortal words his own conception of himself. Jesus in the synagogue reaches back to the noble literature of his people and seizes one of its noblest passages to apply to Himself. You should know what kind of man He will be from His use of this quotation.

Or you can get into the scene by way of the imagination. Horace Bushnell called our Gospel a gift to the imagination. A fine book has appeared within a few years on the “Religious Use of the Imagination.” Here is a place for it. A village Church; the usual gathering of people; some of them dull and respectable, some of them respectable and dull; reverent, devout, pious, and faithful to the services of the synagogue; none of them expecting any very mighty thing to happen, least of all to or through a neighbor's son; some of them possibly wondering how they could interest the young men in the regular meetings, already in danger of the peril of the

modern Church, the peril of making religion cheap in the effort to make it interesting; a youth, known to them all, perhaps regarded as a bit singular; a new tone in the voice, a new look in the eye, a sudden and startling conviction that something has happened; the look of wonder, the inquiry, the unreason and folly of those whose conventional worship and ways have had a shock, the shock of reality—you can see it all.

Or you can get into the scene by way of emphasis. Perhaps this was the regular lesson of the day. The people had heard it read or droned for years either with a false emphasis or without any emphasis at all. It had once been a living phrase. It got into their literature because it had once been alive. It became literature because it had been life. But it had become that pathetic and unlovely thing, "a dead letter." All at once it became alive again. A man had hold of it; it had hold of a man. The quiet air of the synagogue is made electric by the sound of one emphasizing the nouns, the pronouns, and the verbs, the personal terms. The worshippers saw an Inspired Scripture becoming a fulfilled Scripture right before their eyes. And a people who do not see it fulfilled in this personal way will not long believe in its inspiration. The test of its inspiration is its power to fulfill itself in personal life. All that they saw that quiet day in the synagogue.

But whether you enter by the gate of quotation, or imagination, or emphasis, you come upon the very finest spectacle our world has to offer—the vision of a man interpreting his life. It is always going on, it is always interesting. Our most significant question to a youth is this: What are you going to be when you grow up? His answer has meaning for the world; meaning whether he be son of a king or son of a carpenter.

1. Jesus interpreted His life, defined its relations, its purposes and its contents at the highest level, "in the power of the Spirit."

A perfect human scene is this. That gives it its point of contact for us. A divine transaction it is also. That gives it its permanent and high significance. We call it a human scene and hark back in our thought to the burning bush beside which Moses found out in God's presence the meaning of his own life; to the gathering of plain old Jesse's sons for the choosing of one to be king of his people; to Elisha plowing in the field of Shaphat when suddenly from being a plowman he became a prophet; to the herdman of Tekoa when he saw the vision and heard the call that placed his life in the stream of Providence for his age and all ages.

Most distinctly do we think of that other prophet at the door of the temple who in most thrilling surroundings finally heard the Voice saying, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" His own name is not spoken. He is not singled out and drafted. It is like that later hour in Church history, when Francis Asbury stood before a little company of men and asked in God's name again, "Who will go out to the deserts and swamps, the disease, poverty and death of the Great Pee Dee?" No names are mentioned. No one is drafted. It makes our hearts beat faster even now to see Isaiah in one century and Enoch George in another moved alike by God, both alike in the power of the Spirit, arise and say, "Here am I, send me." A hundred instances can be quoted out of later history. Life is one. Centuries and centuries have nothing to do with it. The wind always bloweth where it listeth, and maketh kin of holy souls. And wherever God descends upon a chosen spirit and such spirit royally responds the temple and the synagogue are found again.

In that stimulating book, the "Magnetism of Christ," it is suggested and properly, I think, that long before this day in that very village Church, "Jesus had leaped to a foresight of what His ministry would be as the Rabbi read this passage in ordinary course." The clear vision in the synagogue is based upon long brooding over what the earlier prophet saw. Not to Isaiah, I think, was it so clear or so large as to Jesus. This is the glory of all real literature. It arises out of life, it springs from an immortal incident, but it returns to enrich and enlarge later life, and the incidental becomes the universal. The Psalmist thinks of himself in God's care and says tenderly, "The Lord is my Shepherd," but the race takes up the phrase while God walks with men beside all streams. The local has become the general. Jesus gave to Isaiah's words that day a breadth and bloom, a meaning and splendour in religious thought and life far beyond the older prophet's conception. One does not say the universal thing by trying, or do it by a conscious effort. The true, the vital and the meaningful become the universal. The thing that happens by a burning bush, or in a village Church, or in a small college, gets lifted into permanence by Him who calls ever for the real and genuine.

"At life's highest level, in the power of the Spirit"—how this example is needed in our own time. So many men are determining their lives on other levels and under other power. So many lives strike the ground early because they start so near it. Men develop early what Charles Kingsley called "the nasty little virtue of prudence." They easily quench the Spirit. They do not decide their career at the high levels. They see the heavens open, they hear a voice, they catch clear gleams, they see the divine vision—and hesitate and calculate until the gleam is gone. Once and again the tide rolls over

them. They resist and are left stranded on the beach. I knew one who might have been a patriot, and did become a pettifogger. Another with a call to be a missionary became a money changer. Once they climbed the rugged steeps and saw God face to face and, awe-struck, were moved to determine their lives in His presence. Then they feared the lofty and transcendent. They became ordinary and petty.

“If chosen men could never be alone
In deep, wide silence, open-doored to God,
No greatness ever had been dreamed or done.”

—Lowell.

Men fear the supernatural. They distrust their best moments. They “take themselves in hand.” They stifle their inspired emotions. They evaporate the life of the Spirit. They come down to so-called prudent and reasonable levels. They live within narrow and secular horizons. If Psalm, or hymn, or prayer or sermon, or Holy Spirit of God through all, or none of these, clutches at their hearts until they are impelled to be God’s men, they wait, and question and falter and crush it all.

The danger to life lies not in the loftiness of it. Life’s great principles are always to be read in the light of life’s best examples. “If I could become a preacher like Brooks then I would gladly enter the ministry; if I could be a doctor like MacLure, then I would become a physician; if I could be a missionary like Hannington, then I would go to the ends of the earth; if I could be a teacher like Arnold, then all my life should be spent with boys.” At such levels we are to determine our careers. The whole world turns back when men resist and turn their backs upon these highest hours. The whole race would have been beggared at its greatest need, if Jesus in the synagogue had said: “This

day is this noblest Scripture denied and resisted in your eyes." It is because He and others believe that they can live up to life's best moments that life has any best moments left. "In the Spirit!" Tides of power from the noble literature flowing over Him; thrilling memories from the heroic history surging through Him; holy influences from the village Church making their appeal to Him; far, wide vision of immortal service to men calling Him like a bugle cry; living Spirit of the everliving God descending upon Him in inspiration, peace and power. No wonder He read it with new accents and new tones: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me—this day is this Scripture fulfilled." Miracles in nature and men; parables, sermons, conversations, prayers; services, sacrifices and death; broken tombs, empty graves of self and others; triumph, conquest for endless ages all are for such a person as this. To such the universe is pledged. To such God is committed. For such all things work together.

2. Jesus interpreted His life, defined its relations, its purposes and its contents in the light of the world's urgent needs.

Henry Drummond found here the program of Christianity. It is a program of great age. It lies latent in the words spoken to Abraham that "in thee and in thy seed the nations of the earth may be blessed." It got fuller explication when Isaiah stated it. Jesus took it up as a living phrase and made His life a comment on it. Jesus came into a historic stream. This program was in the world. He made it vital. It is still in the world. We must make it vital. In His day it applied to Jerusalem, in ours to Chicago and Shanghai. He went on foot to fulfill it. We go by electricity. But our program is the same. He stated it in matchless terms, but ability

to state it is not the same as a holy endeavor to do it. It is a far cry from His use of these words to His triumphant but modest declaration, "I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do." Bartimeus and the lepers, the men stone deaf and the men stone dead, all lie between. But they are only the details of the program. One plays the program through by playing each note in its perfection. Ages ago this was the program. Ages hence it will yet be. There is nothing else to do.

There are two spurious forms of Christianity, one the exclusively ritualistic, the other, the exclusively practical. Faith without works is dead, and works without faith quickly die. This Jesus was in the power of the Spirit in the synagogue and out of it. His words have the ring of a challenge in them. I can easily imagine a young man sitting by, rousing himself to join at once with this manifestly real man. This is the way to make religion interesting. You can not make it interesting by making it cheap, but by making it real. Young men are drawn to Jesus because He has something worth while going on. As Emerson said: "This man is not going to live simply to wear out his boots." One might add, not even going to Church. He evidently will know how "to get the wine from life's grapes, the soul from life's flesh." The modern religious man gets the power that he may feel the power and enjoy the experience of getting it and having it. But Jesus got the power that He might use it. Religion in His hands is interesting because vital. He will be a true ritualist fulfilling every noble and dignified form of worship. But He will let loose a new music on the streets, and fill the air with a new incense from the swinging censers of holy service. He will get on the heights, He will go to the depths. He will be in touch with God, that is the privilege of a

saint. He will be in touch with men, that is the duty of a saint. And He will touch men with power because He has been with God. He will go to unutterable weakness, but He will go with infinite strength. He will descend to unspeakable poverty, but He will descend with inestimable wealth.

This is the everlasting wonder of Christ's work, this, its eternal inspiration to us. He linked grace with service. His full hands became open hands. God made no more appeal to Him than did the poor, the broken, the captives, the helpless. "The wonderful thing about this scene in the synagogue, what comes first and remains last, is Christ's exalted consciousness of an endowment of the Spirit so plenary, an anointing and dedication so divine for what seems to men so lowly a task. He saw, when as yet no man understood, the divineness of winning broken lives back to God and liberty." For the doing of this the Spirit was upon Him. That He did this was the test of His Messiahship. Almost in these very terms He sent His famous reply to John's anxious inquiry. Thus it is ever in His Church. The Pentecostal baptism brings the ends of the earth in view. When Christ becomes His own chief care then the Christ ceases to be. When the Church turns back upon herself to care only or chiefly for herself, then the Church begins to die. When the man coddles and nurses his baptism then the baptism becomes rancid and nauseous like the left-over manna. Virtue must go out of the Son of God or He is no Son of God at all. This is Christ's appeal to us men now. He asks us to be pious, but He asks us to be useful. He deals with the modern college student and with the modern business man as He did with Matthew. There is no pious twaddle in His greeting. He does not scold

Him or plead with or cry over Him. The imperial man in the Master appeals to the real and fundamental man in the collector; soul leaps to soul between Master and man. "Matthew, I have a use for you. Come." And Matthew rose, all his ugly, shady past dropping as he did so, crowned with an immortal crown. He has been called by the Master to do things with and for the Master. No better chance is ever offered to any man in any age, student, banker or collector.

Failure to make this supreme response makes the rich young ruler the object of your pity forever. Before him flashed the supreme visions. Within him arose the high desires. His heart beat fast in Christ's presence. He wanted to interpret his life in the terms of the eternal, but staggered and failed when called to interpret it in the terms of the useful and unselfish. He would have taken a part, but one must take all. One can not have that Holy Spirit with its eternal life without having also the human spirit with its lepers, its beggars, its poor. We shall not go to the heights and see God face to face unless we go down to the depths and meet life's need also.

"Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim,
Straight was the path of gold for Him,
And the need of the world of men for me."

So sings Mr. Browning not quite truly. For walking in that path of duty lo, men walk in the path of glory; walking in that path of service men walk in the way of splendor; walking in that path of need lo! it becomes a path of gold. And for the Lord and for the man it is no path of gold unless it touches also the need of men.

The gateway to Cornell University contains this inspiring inscription: "So enter that daily thou mayest

become more thoughtful and more learned; so depart that daily thou mayest become more useful to thy country and to mankind." The gateway to Harvard is similar in its sentiment. It is the modern ideal for the Christian scholar. Under this influence the true scholar stands with pride among his fellows, clad in the significant robes of the university, but under it he also gathers up his royal robes about him like those Oxford scholars of Wesley's day and like thousands beside, and goes down to the jails, collieries, and the costermongers; to East London, to bowery or to mining camp; and human life gets a chance. But it all goes back for its best, its most inspiring example to that synagogue in the far off town. Over its low door might have been written: "So enter that the Spirit of the Lord may fall upon you. So depart that the blind, the deaf, the poor, and the prisoner may get a chance." In these two terms must the modern man interpret and define his life.

They say occasionally that there is no great career any more for a strong man. And men become captains of finance to see how big a fortune they can pile up. They choose the worse when they might have the best. But would you have felt that there was no career open that day when Jesus took up His life in the royal fashion in the synagogue? Oh, young Jews fling your fish nets to the waves, throw your money changing to the winds, for God is among men again and men are going to get a chance. This Master of the holy life, and the white hand is crying out in imperial tones to the best of you, "Come. I have use for you. Come. Remain with me till the Spirit descends and the power comes; with Me till virtue goes out and all life is made whole!" Oh, men of today, this Master of the Spirit-filled life, this Master of the open hands cries out anew, "Come,

I have use for you. Come." Let God enter until life is raised to its highest levels. Let God use until all other life is raised to the highest level. Thus must life be interpreted and defined.

The Spirit came upon Him and He made the blind to see; the Spirit came upon Him and He made the deaf to hear; the Spirit came upon Him and He cast out the demons from men, women and boys; the Spirit came upon Him and He cleansed the lepers; the Spirit came upon Him and He opened tombs and prisons; the Spirit came upon Him and He spoke the truth in His matchless way; the Spirit came upon Him and He lived for men; the Spirit came upon Him and He died for men; the Spirit came upon Him and He redeemed the world. This is the true power of the Spirit. It does not exhaust itself or evaporate in pious rapture. It is an experience, a power, a service, a high and holy joy. It despises crosses and joyfully endures shame for the gladness of completing this divine program. So it must ever be. Upon us must the Spirit descend. Then must we minister to the needy; then must we heal the sick; then must we redeem the great cities and restore the waste places; then must we banish the saloon; then must we bring industrial peace; then must we save childhood and youth; then must we teach the world the truth of Christ; then must we capture the continents for Christ.

3. Jesus Christ interpreted His life, defined its relations, its purposes and its contents with a commanding sense of life's unity.

There is a dreadful chasm between what we know and what we do, between our visions and our victories, between our intentions and our achievements, between our speech and our conduct, and often between the first

of life and the last of it. No such wretchedness mars the unity of Christ's life. His deeds are as perfect and as luminous as His speech. He perfectly bridged the gap between intention and achievement. His daily conduct was just as good as His best talk. The line of His life from boyhood to its end was a perfectly straight line. The last of His fulfilled the plan of the first. There was neither variableness nor shadow of turning. He gave his life at its beginning the direction it was to keep until its end. It keeps, in consequence, that same direction until this day. It acquired an undiminished, projected efficiency and consistency.

When Sir Philip Sidney was a lad he wrote to his brother these words: "If there are any good wars I shall attend them." Mr. Curtis points out that afterward Sidney wrote the letter that kept Elizabeth from marrying the Catholic Duke, and thus saved England for Protestantism; that he wrote the *Défense of Poesy*; that on the battle field he glorified courage and finally glorified chivalry by giving his last drop of water to his dying comrade. But it all lies in that early sentence written to his brother.

A young lawyer floating down the mighty river saw the evils of slavery, and said quietly: "If I ever get a chance to hit that thing, I will hit it hard." Long afterward, Abraham Lincoln issued his emancipation proclamation, with the words: "And upon this act I invoke the blessing of Almighty God and considerate judgment of mankind." The two sentences are of one piece. From the day when Cecil Rhodes, a student of beautiful Oriel College, hunting health in South Africa, dreamed of presenting an Empire to his Queen, until the day when, worn out, he lay down and slept at the top of the world, his life had but one note. Whether

making a fortune, or giving it away, at least, it was all of a piece. It makes one think of Warren Hastings and his life-long plan and purpose to recover his ancestral estate. Few things are more pitiful in life than the spectacle of a man whose later years are spent trying to undo his earlier ones, or whose later years are utterly defeated by the sins and blunders of the earlier ones. Out of the French Revolution came many tragic and pathetic scenes, but none more so than the picture of Mirabeau, the one strong man, who should have saved France and was not able. When he saw his poor unhappy country weltering in her own blood, he cried, "Oh, the sins of my youth! How they keep me from saving France in this hour." It was the bitterness of St. Paul's life that part of it went in the wrong direction. He knew the lack of unity in it.

Now turn from all this to the life of Jesus. At the age of twelve He is in the Temple asking and answering questions. To His wondering mother He looks up with His great wide eyes and says: "Do you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" And we have in that scene one point on the line of His life. You see the direction in which His face is set. Years go by, and He is in the synagogue. Back into the old and noble literature of His people He reaches for the words we are studying, and declares: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." But that is His "Father's business." There is no other then or now. It gives us two points on the line of His life, and that line has not

swerved in direction by a hair's breadth. Once again He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." That also is of the same piece and is in the same direction. Again He said: "Not My will, but Thine be done." The boy of the Temple is the man of the Garden, but the man's face is set in the same direction as the boy's. It was all in the same direction, all of one kind. No wonder that at last He looked calmly and triumphantly into His Father's face and said: "I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." There is no other outcome for such a life. The moral order of the universe would be reversed if such unity did not so end. His life was like His seamless robe.

Many lessons we learn from this scene, but we must surely learn this one—that we are to give life at life's beginning the direction and tone we want life to maintain until life's end. If there are any good wars for humanity we must attend them. In youth, manhood and age we must be about our Father's business. Then as we grow old we shall find ever that "The best is yet to be."

"The last of life for which the first is planned." Three notes we have struck in our interpretation, loftiness, helpfulness, unity, divineness, humanness, oneness. Another remains. They must all be struck together. The harmony will be lacking if either is absent. The final is the note of divine power.

4. Jesus interpreted His life, defined its relations, its purpose and its contents with an absolute sense of God's presence and power.

No wonder He was so steady and strong. His life was not broken or partial like ours. We easily hold one truth, He easily held all truth. Our fathers were not very sure of God's fatherhood. We have recovered

that precious truth and do not see how any could live in any other atmosphere. But in our recovery of the one truth we have lost somewhat of the sense of God's almightiness which our fathers had. They were not quite sure that God was kind, but they never doubted that God was strong. They were not quite sure that He was love, they were perfectly sure that He was omnipotent. They were not quite sure that He was good; they were certain that He was king. They were not quite certain of the warmth and tenderness and universality of His love; they were tremendously certain that He sat upon the throne and ruled the world. Not always conscious that He was near, they were always certain that He was high and lifted up. We have gained something which they lacked and lost something which they had. Jesus held fast to both great truths. And the atmosphere created by these two mighty truths makes possible both life and victory. One could live in the truth of God's love, or one could conquer in that atmosphere of His almightiness, but one could live triumphantly in the truth of the Almighty Father. Jesus did. Never had any one else such visible and evident grounds for doubting one or the other. Never did any one else so steadily hold to both. This is our hope and strength. This is faith.

"The feeling that there's God. He reigns and rules
Out of this low world."

There are many forms of skepticism still afloat, though some have gone beneath the waves, but I know of none quite so dangerous as this which doubts whether God can. We easily eliminate the Supernatural power, while trying to retain the divine love, and we cut the nerve of power as we do it. All about us are men and boys and the demons have hold of them. Here are deaf, dumb,

blind, captives. And here is an agonized world crying to our Master saying "We brought him to Thy disciples and they could not." Once "God-filled men were able to bring the powers of God into contact with death and disease, with doubt and opposition, with sorrow and shame and sin, and to show that in all these things God in them was the Conqueror." All other questions seem small compared with that. Jesus never doubted it. Knowing whence He came, and whither He went, He girded Himself with a towel and washed the disciples feet. Knowing whence He came and whither He went, He touched the eyes of the blind man and they were opened; He spoke and the deaf man heard; He commanded and the tossing waves kept still; He spoke and the dead man arose from the dead; He commanded and the lepers were cleansed; He spoke and the characters of men were changed and their motives transformed. Knowing whence He came and whither He went, the cross became, not a symbol of defeat, but a symbol of victory; and knowing whence He came and whither He went, He went down unto death, but it was not possible that the grave should hold Him. It is not possible that the grave shall ever hold any man like that.

These are the four notes of life's interpretation as we read them in that far off scene that seems so modern and so near; loftiness, service, unity power. Take any one away and the interpretation fails. In Christ's name I call to men and women everywhere, especially to college men and women, to draw near to that synagogue where our living Lord ever stands; draw near while the heavens open again; draw near while the Spirit descends; draw near with the deaf, the blind and the helpless; draw near for today and tomorrow; draw near while the Father Almighty is at hand, and join our ev-

erliving Master in this supreme interpretation of life, so that once again we shall say: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

